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ABSTRACT

Designed to inform and empower women to participate in debates and decisions about the future of work in Australia, this kit provides everything needed to run a discussion session on the future of work with women in the community. It consists of a guide for users, workshop guide, topic sheets, and background reading. The guide for users introduces the topic of the future of work, covers how to use the kit, and provides hints for facilitators. The workshop guide is a step-by-step outline for a three-hour workshop session on the future of work. It covers welcome and introductions, thinking about work, changes in work, looking to the future, shaping our future, and winding up. The left-hand pages contain brief step-by-step instructions that guide the facilitator through the various workshop activities. They also contain extra hints and prompts that might be useful as references during the session. The right-hand pages contain a number of fully scripted pieces. These are work-for-word examples of how particular sections of the workshop might be presented. "The Future of Work: An Overview" is a background reading that provides additional information about the changes reshaping work. Five topic sheets focus on issues relevant to the future of work: "Broader Horizons or Narrower Options? Globalisation and Internationalisation"; "A Fair Day's Work--Wage Fixing and Industrial Relations"; "Divided We Stand? Poverty and Inequality"; "But What Can We Do? How Communities Are Responding"; and "The Basis of the Bargain--Some Key Issues for Women." They provide facts and information, identify key questions relating to the topic, and include a resource that might stimulate discussion. The guide includes a number of transparencies that illustrate particular points during the session. (YLB)

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BROTHERHOOD OF ST LAURENCE

WOMEN SHAPING THE FUTURE

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THE FUTURE OF WORK

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THE FUTURE OF WORK DISCUSSION KIT

Janet Pine, Sue Jackson & Kate MacNeill

WOMEN SHAPING THE FUTURE

THE FUTURE OF WORK

GUIDE FOR USERS

Janet Pine, Sue Jackson & Kate MacNeill

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Welcome to the **WOMEN AND THE FUTURE OF WORK KIT.** We believe the kit is an important resource which will help to empower women to play their part in shaping our shared future. This section provides an introduction to the kit and how to use it. Please take a little time to read this section before moving on to other parts of the kit. Topics covered in this section are:

- → **WHY TALK ABOUT THE FUTURE OF WORK? - AN INTRODUCTION**
- → **THE KIT - A GUIDED TOUR**
- → **HINTS FOR FACILITATORS**

WHY TALK ABOUT THE FUTURE OF WORK?

Some very big changes are re-shaping work and how it is distributed. High levels of unemployment are one symptom of these changes. The changes which are taking place pose huge challenges for the Australian community as we move forward into the next century. The way in which we respond to these challenges will determine not only how we will work, but also more broadly how we will live and the kind of society which we will create for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren.

The future of work is an important issue which will affect every one of us. It is not something which should be left only to politicians or 'experts'. We should all play a part in shaping our shared future. That is one reason why it is important for women to become involved in discussion about the future of work. Another important reason for women to become involved is that the re-shaping of work raises important issues about women's lives.

This kit is designed to inform and empower women to participate in debates and decisions about the future of work in Australia. It has been produced through the Brotherhood of St Laurence Future of Work Project with funding provided by the Victorian Women's Trust. Further information about the Future of Work Project and about the Victorian Women's Trust is included elsewhere in the kit.

We hope that you find the kit a useful tool for stimulating discussion in your community. Now read on for information about what is in the kit and how to use it.

THE KIT - A GUIDED TOUR

The kit provides you with everything you will need to run a discussion session on the future of work with women in your community. It also includes information and resources which can be used if you want to have further follow-up discussions, to explore particular topics in more detail, to check facts or to find further information.

The kit is designed to be easy to use. You will need someone who is prepared to act as the facilitator for the discussion session, but they do not need to be an 'expert' or to have a lot of experience in running discussions. The workshop guide is an easy to follow step-by-step guide for the facilitator. It can be used equally well by people who have a lot of experience and those who have little experience in leading discussions.

The kit is designed to encourage people to draw on their own experience and knowledge in discussing and thinking about the future of work.

The women and the future of work kit contains :

- ➜ A guide for users (which you are reading at the moment)
- ➜ A workshop guide
- ➜ Topic sheets
- ➜ Background reading

THE WORKSHOP GUIDE

The workshop guide is a step-by-step outline for a three hour workshop session on the future of work. The workshop session is structured so as to allow people taking part to leave the session with a good overview of issues relevant to the future of work.

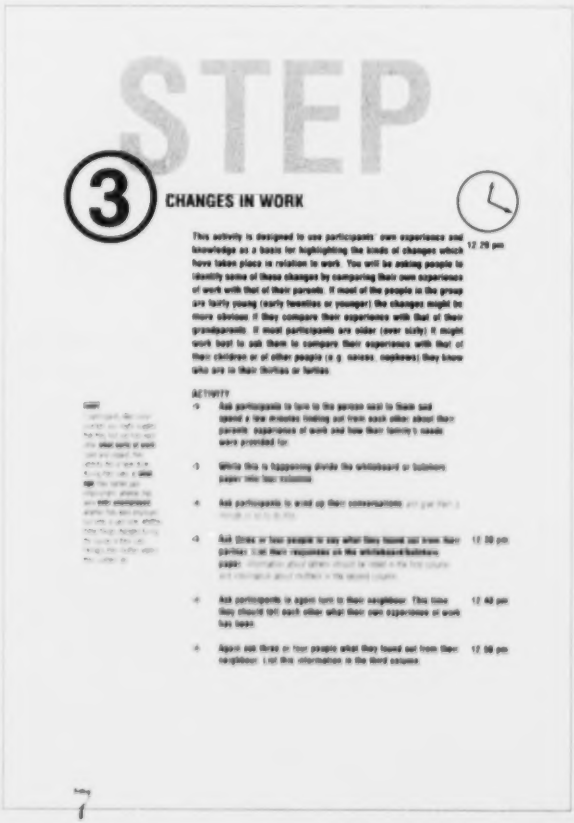
The workshop guide is designed to sit flat when it is open. This means that you can sit it on a flat surface and refer to it without having to hold it open. The sample pages which follow illustrate how the guide works.

The left hand pages contain brief step-by-step instructions which guide the facilitator through the various workshop activities. The left hand pages also contain extra hints and prompts which you might find useful to refer to at various points during the session. The right hand pages contain a number of fully scripted pieces. These are word for word examples of how you might present particular sections of the workshop.

If you feel confident and familiar with the material you can just follow the brief instructions on the left hand pages. If you feel less confident you can switch over to the right hand pages at the appropriate times and simply read out the word for word scripts provided. The guide is arranged so that you can then switch back to the instructions on the left hand pages without having to flip backwards through the guide. (This means that you will sometimes come across blank pages as the instructions on the left page do not continue until the more detailed pieces on the right hand page are finished).

This probably sounds confusing, but you will find that the workshop guide is actually very easy to use. Let's take a couple of examples.

Look at Sample 1.
This page lists a series of steps for taking the group through an activity designed to get them talking about the changes which are taking place in relation to work. The first step tells you to ask participants to spend a few minutes talking to each other about their parents' experience of work. Beside this are some suggestions about ways in which you might encourage or prompt this discussion.


STEP

3 CHANGES IN WORK

12.20 pm

ACTIVITY

12.30 pm

12.40 pm

12.50 pm

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Now look at sample 2.
The left hand page asks you to draw together the threads of the discussion and briefly lists some key points which you should cover. Opposite this on the right hand page is a word for word script which you can use if you are not familiar enough with the issues to work from the dot points on the left page.

→ Ask participants if they can identify any patterns which emerge from these lists. 1 pm

→ Ask participants whether there are any other changes which they think are important that have not already been mentioned or which are not obvious from the lists. Maybe there are changes which have taken place in their own lives or work which they think are important but these are not in the fourth column.

DRAW TOGETHER THE THREADS

At this point you should note the changes which participants have identified on a broad overview of the key changes which are taking place in relation to work.

You might find it easiest to use the prepared outline on the opposite page.

If you feel confident enough you could work from the following checklist of key issues. Whichever way you do it try to make sure that you write down the key which has been put together by the group.

KEY ISSUES

How things used to be
Men full time paid work from age 15 to 65

Women mainly left paid employment after marriage or childbirth

More manual jobs. Many in manufacturing industry protected by tariffs.

Living standards secured through full employment and safety wage and minimum welfare (dole) net

Changes
- Unemployment and long term unemployment
- Globalisation
- Technology
- Shift from manufacturing to services
- Shift from manual to clerical work
- Growth of part time and casual employment
- Increased work force participation by women but this change is slowing down
- Growing divide between the unemployed and the rest of work
- Growing divide between the well paid and the low paid

BREAK 1.30 pm

In using the guide all you need to do is work through the steps on the left hand pages and refer to the right hand pages when you need to.

You will notice that there are a number of clock symbols down the side of the left hand pages. These are there to help you keep an eye on the time and to get through the session in the time allowed. The clocks show the amount of time which you should allow for each step and activity. They are based on a session which starts at 12 noon. You can write in pencil underneath the clocks the times when these things should happen during your session.

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Included with the workshop guide are a number of 'pictures' which you will use during the session to illustrate particular points. These are numbered so that you know which one to use when. This symbol tells you when to use the pictures and which picture to use (see sample 2). The pictures have been printed both on transparencies and on plain paper. The transparencies are for use with an overhead projector. If you do not have access to an overhead projector you will need to photocopy the pictures and hand them out at the appropriate times.

THE TOPIC SHEETS

Each of the topic sheets focuses on a different issue relevant to the future of work. It is likely that these issues will have been touched upon in the workshop session. The topic sheets:

- ➔ provide facts and information about the topic or issue;
- ➔ identify key questions relating to the topic; and
- ➔ include a resource, such as an article, which might stimulate discussion of the topic.

The topic sheets can be used to explore particular topics in more detail, to check facts or find further information. They can also be used as a starting point for further discussions which some groups may want to organise as a follow-up to the workshop session. If you are using the topic sheets as discussion starters you will probably want to photocopy them so that each person who will be taking part in the discussion can have their own copy. You may want to distribute these copies a few days in advance so that people have a chance to read through them before the discussion.

Background reading

This article has been included to provide additional information about the changes which are re-shaping work in our society. You might use it to find out relevant facts and statistics, or to become more familiar with the issues which are relevant for the future of work.

Hints FOR FACILITATORS

The discussion starter kit is designed to increase women's confidence and knowledge so that they are able to participate in the decisions which will shape our shared future. The workshop session is structured to allow all participants to have a say and to contribute to the discussion. Your role as facilitator is to keep the session flowing and to ensure that everyone has a chance to contribute. You do not have to play the role of 'teacher' or 'expert'. The following tips will help you to ensure that the session goes smoothly.

1. **Read through all of the material** in this kit so that you feel comfortable with the material and issues to be presented.

2. **Organise a suitable place** for the discussion. The session will go more smoothly if the participants are comfortable and feel at ease in the room you choose. Adequate heating and ventilation are important. It is also helpful if there are facilities for making tea and coffee. Bear in mind any special needs which those attending may have; e.g. avoid venues with steps if the participants are likely to include people who use wheelchairs or have some difficulty in getting around.

3. A few days before the discussion **make sure that you have everything that you will need** for the session. Double check this a few hours before the session. A list of what you will need is at the end of this section.

4. **Arrive at the venue early** enough to give yourself time to check the arrangements, get set up and relax before the session begins.

5. Discussion will flow more freely if you **arrange seating in a circle or a semi-circle** rather than in rows.

6. **Be welcoming** and set a friendly and relaxed atmosphere from the time when participants first arrive.

7. **Follow the workshop session steps and stick to the time** allowed for each step. This will ensure that you get through the whole session and that participants leave with a sense of completion.

8. **Keep discussion focused** on the issues and **make sure that no one person dominates** the discussion. If you think someone is dominating and preventing others from having a say, smile at them and say, 'Would anyone else like to comment on this issue?' If necessary ask a specific person - perhaps one of the quieter people in the group - for their views.

9. **Listen carefully** to what is being said so that you can help to move the discussion along. If it is not clear exactly what someone is trying to get across ask them to explain a bit more about what they are saying.

10 **Don't jump in too quickly** if there is a silence or a pause in the discussion. People might be thinking about what has been said. Count to ten in your head to give people time to respond before asking someone to comment or moving on to the next step. Again, this can be a good time to ask one of the quieter people for their views.

11 **Acknowledge** participants' **differences** and respect them. **Encourage people to feel free to express different views** - this makes for better discussion and most people will be interested to hear what others have to say. If a difference of views between participants becomes heated remind the group that we are all entitled to our opinions, that it is important that we are all able to have our say and that on some things we may need to agree to disagree. Make sure that you stay impartial - your role is to draw out different views rather than take sides.

12 **Be prepared to move the group on to the next step** or issue at the appropriate time. People may become very involved in discussion of some points. You may need to bring the discussion to a close at certain times so that you can move on. You might say something like, 'We could probably talk about this issue all day but we need to move on to the next part of our discussion. You might like to continue the discussion of this issue during the tea break or at the end of the session.'

13 **Don't allow the group to treat you as the person who has all the answers.** Invite others to comment on questions which are directed to you. Encourage participants to talk to each other rather than just to you.

14 Most importantly, **DON'T PANIC!** The group will be on your side and will want to help you if they can. If you lose your place or your train of thought, ask the group to give you a moment to collect your thoughts, then check the workshop guide. Encourage people to continue chatting while you do so. What may seem like a very long silence to you while you get back on track will seem like a very short time to everyone else, so relax and take your time. Taking a couple of deep breaths before you start again can help to calm you down if you get a bit flustered.

15 When it is all over **give yourself a pat on the back**. You have helped to make sure that women play their part in shaping the future.

(If you want more information on facilitating groups you could read the *Resource manual for facilitators in community development* prepared by People Projects and published by Employ Publishing Group, P.O. Box 1042, Windsor, Victoria, 3181).

What you will need

The things which you will definitely need are :

- ➜ Butchers paper
- ➜ Texta pens (about four, preferably different colours)
- ➜ BlueTac (for sticking butchers paper on the wall)
- ➜ Overhead projector OR photocopies of pictures from workshop guide

Other things which you may need or which would be useful:

- ➜ Whiteboard or blackboard
- ➜ Whiteboard markers or chalk
- ➜ Name tags for participants
- ➜ Tea, coffee, milk, cups, kettle or urn (if not provided on site)

You will need butchers paper for two reasons. Firstly, when you ask the participants to break into small groups during Step Five, they will need some paper to note down their ideas and views. Secondly, you will need to write on it during the session. Even if you have a whiteboard or blackboard you are bound to run out of space. This is when the butchers paper comes into its own. You will need enough textas for the small groups to use. Since you will need a number of textas anyway, make them different colours so that you are not restricted to just one colour for the notes which you make on butchers paper during the session. Similarly, if you are using a whiteboard try to have several different colour pens.

WORKSHOP GUIDE

THE SIX STEPS

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
2. THINKING ABOUT WORK
3. CHANGES IN WORK
4. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE
5. SHAPING OUR FUTURE
6. WINDING UP

STEP

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

12 o'clock

- → **Get people settled and make sure that they are comfortable.**
- → **Introduce yourself.**
- → **Welcome the group.**
- → **Ask people to introduce themselves.**
  You might also ask them to mention how they heard about the workshop, how they came to be here, why they wanted to / decided to come along.
- → **Attend to housekeeping**
  e.g. tell people where the toilets are, where to get tea, coffee etcetera.
- → **Introduce the workshop and format.**
- → **Explain 'ground rules'.**
- → **Check whether anyone has any questions** or if there is anything which needs to be clarified.

12 .10 pm

Example

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions

My name is .... I would like to welcome you to this workshop. We are going to spend some time together talking about something which affects us all and which will have a big effect on what our lives and our children's lives are like in future. But first, let's go around the group and introduce ourselves. [As we go around you might like to say a few words about how you heard about this workshop and why you decided to come along today/tonight.]

Arrangements

Now that we've met each other there are a few things I need to do before we get started... Firstly, some important information - the **toilets** are (where?) and you can get **tea and coffee** from (where?). We will have a break during this session [but feel free to get a cup of tea or coffee or to visit the toilet during the workshop]. Explain arrangements re smoking; e.g. there is no smoking in this room but smokers can smoke [where? outside?] during the break.

About the workshop

The workshop session which we will be doing today will give us a chance to think about and talk about :

- ➜ the role that work plays in our lives and in our society;
- ➜ the changes which are taking place in relation to work and the effect they will have on our lives;
- ➜ what these changes mean for the future; and
- ➜ how we can help to shape our future

We will be using this kit which will take us through a number of steps that will help us to think about these issues.

Ground rules

What we are basically going to do is have a **conversation with each other.** Each of us has some knowledge from our own experience about the things we will discuss and hopefully each of us will learn a bit more about them from this workshop. Some of the time we will spend as one group. **For some of the time we will break into smaller groups** to discuss things which we will then share with the whole group.

There are a few things which will help to ensure that we all get the most from the session.

We should all **feel free to say what we think** and put forward our point of view - that will make for a more interesting discussion. This is not a test where you have to come up with the right answers. There will be probably be some things on which we will agree and others on which we will disagree. We should **feel free to say if we disagree with something.** The important thing is that we are prepared to listen to each other's point of view and to discuss it. **Everyone has a contribution to make.** Listening to another person's point of view does not mean that you have to agree with it. **If you don't understand something, say so.** Chances are, other people will be feeling the same way.

My role is to help to keep the discussion on track and to help us to move through a process of discussion that will allow us to think through the important issues which we will be talking about.

Questions / clarification
Before we go on does anyone have any questions or things they want clarified?

STEP

2 THINKING ABOUT WORK

This part of the workshop is intended to introduce the session by clarifying what we mean when we refer to work and by highlighting the role which work plays in our lives and values. It relies more heavily on input from the facilitator than most other sections of the workshop. 12 .10 pm

→ **Outline the different kinds of work, the way in which they are distributed and the role which they play in how we view ourselves and are viewed by others.**

Work from either the following summary or from the more detailed outline on the opposite page.

→ **Defining work**

- Note that work includes both paid and unpaid work.
- What role does work play in how we define ourselves, how others view us, our place in society?
- What are the differences between paid work and unpaid work?

→ **Unpaid work**

- How much of this work is done?
- Who does it?
- How is it valued?

→ **Paid work**

- Employment and self-employment.
- Full-time, part-time and casual work. **12 .30 pm**

Example

THINKING ABOUT WORK

We will be spending a lot of our time today thinking and talking about work. We should start by being clear about what it is we mean when we talk about work.

Often when people meet for the first time one of the first questions they ask each other is about work. '**What do you do?**' or perhaps, 'What do you do for a living?'

What **this tells us** is that **work plays a very important part in our lives.** It is important in **how others view us,** in **how we view ourselves** and in **establishing our place in society.** It is something which takes up a large part of our time and energy and which one way or another plays a significant role in determining how we live.

It is still the case, although perhaps less so than it used to be, that women when asked this question 'What do you do?' will in many instances answer **'Oh, I don't work,' or 'I'm just a housewife.' We tend to think of work as paid work** and to ignore all of the work which is not paid. Yet without this unpaid work nappies would not get changed, people would not get fed, houses would sink under the weight of accumulated dirt and mess and many of our community services would find it very difficult to manage.

So the first thing for us to bear in mind during our discussion today is that **there are two kinds of work - paid work, and unpaid work.**

There are some important **differences between paid work and unpaid work.** The most obvious one is that paid work provides us with **income,** but you can probably think of others. Unpaid work is not covered by workers compensation, for example (and you don't usually get long service leave as an unpaid worker!).

A lot of **unpaid work** is done in the relatively **private world of our own homes** and may not involve as much **interaction with other people.** Most **paid work is done outside our homes** (although this may change as more people do paid work from home).

Whilst a lot of **unpaid work**, such as caring for children to take one example, is very important many would say that it has **not** been **valued as highly or given as much status** as paid work.

It has been said that **paid work** is an important **part of the model** we have been given **of what it means to be a citizen** and to participate fully in society.

We will probably want to think about the different roles which paid and unpaid work play in our lives and in our society as we discuss the sort of future we would like to see.

PIC 1

It might surprise you to know that there is **more unpaid work done in Australia each year than there is paid work.** In fact **over 51%** of all work done is unpaid. It has been estimated that the **unpaid work in households produces** about **three times as much as manufacturing** industry and ten times the output of the mining industry.

PIC 2

Most of this **unpaid work - about 70% - is done by women. Women spend on average more than 30 hours per week on unpaid work and men about half that amount.** Regardless of income, education, background, or age, women do more unpaid work than men. Even if women are in paid work they do more unpaid work than men. **The amount of unpaid work that men do remains roughly the same no matter how many hours of paid work their wives or partners do.**

PIC 3

So if we are looking at the whole picture when it comes to work it would look something like this.

On the left hand side we have **unpaid work** which is **done both in our homes and in our community.**

On the right hand side is **paid work** which can be **either full-time** - usually 35 hours per week or more - **or part-time**. People who are in paid work either work for themselves or, in most cases, are employed by someone else or by a business.

A growing proportion of paid work is **casual employment** which usually means that the **worker is employed for a set period of time or** that they work **only when they are needed.**

So we will need to keep in mind all these sorts of work as we discuss the kinds of changes which are taking place around us.

STEP

3 CHANGES IN WORK

This activity is designed to use participants' own experience and knowledge as a basis for highlighting the kinds of changes which have taken place in relation to work. You will be asking people to identify some of these changes by comparing their own experience of work with that of their parents. If most of the people in the group are fairly young (early twenties or younger) the changes might be more obvious if they compare their experience with that of their grandparents. If most participants are older (over sixty) it might work best to ask them to compare their experience with that of their children or of other people (e.g. neices, nephews) they know who are in their thirties or forties.

12.20 pm

ACTIVITY

→ **Ask participants to turn to the person next to them and spend a few minutes finding out from each other about their parents' experience of work and how their family's needs were provided for.**

→ **While this is happening divide the whiteboard or butchers paper into four columns.**

→ **Ask participants to wind up their conversations** and give them a minute or so to do this.

→ **Ask three or four people to say what they found out from their partner. List their responses on the whiteboard/butchers paper.** Information about fathers should be listed in the first column and information about mothers in the second column. 12.30 pm

→ **Ask participants to again turn to their neighbour. This time they should tell each other what their own experience of work has been.** 12.40 pm

→ **Again ask three or four people what they found out from their neighbour. List this information in the third column.** 12.50 pm

HINT

If participants need some prompts you might suggest that they find out from each other **what sorts of work** (paid and unpaid) their parents did or have done during their lives, at **what age** they started paid employment, whether they were **ever unemployed**, whether they were employed full-time or part-time, whether these things changed during the course of their lives. Perhaps their mother sewed their clothes? etc.

HINT
Encourage participants to focus on the differences between their parents working life and their own (What do these lists tell us about the differences between our parents' experience of work and our own? What do they tell us about the changes which have taken place?) You may need to start things off by pointing to one or two patterns which you have noticed or by providing more specific prompts. You might ask participants what they think the difference between their parents experience and their own tells us about changes in the following areas:

What sort of work?
- paid or unpaid?
- manual or mental?
- agricultural, manufacturing or services?

Who does this work?
- more women in paid employment
- fewer young people and older men in paid employment

How and when people work -
- in one job all our lives?
- nine-to-five Monday to Friday?
- full time or part time?
- intermittently?
- what sort of machines or technology?
- for a boss or for ourselves?

Where people work -
- at home, on the land, in factories, offices?

→ **Ask participants if they can identify any patterns which emerge from these lists.** List these in the fourth column. **1 pm**

→ **Ask participants whether there are any other changes which they think are important** that have not already been mentioned or which are not obvious from the lists. Maybe there are changes which have taken place in their own lives or work which they think are important. List these also in the fourth column. **1.10 pm**

DRAW TOGETHER THE THREADS

At this point you should link the changes which participants have identified into a broad overview of the key changes which are taking place in relation to work.

You might find it easiest to use the prepared outline on the opposite page.

If you feel confident enough you could work from the following checklist of key issues. Whichever way you do it try to make sure that you refer back to the list which has been put together by the group.

KEY ISSUES

How things used to be:

Men - full-time paid work from age 16 to 65

Women - many left paid employment after marriage or childbirth.

More manual jobs, many in manufacturing industry protected by tariffs.

Living standards ensured through full employment and family wage with a limited welfare safety net.

Changes:

- Unemployment and long term unemployment.
- Globalisation.
- Technology.
- Shift from manufacturing to services.
- Shift from manual to mental work.
- Growth of part-time and casual employment.
- Increased work force participation by women but little change in unpaid work.
- Growing divide between the overworked and the out of work.
- Growing divide between the well paid and the low paid.

BREAK **1.30 pm**

This is a good time to have a short break to allow people to stretch their legs, get a cup of tea or coffee or have a cigarette.

Example

DRAWING TOGETHER THE THREADS

The sorts of changes which we have been talking about and which we can see taking place in our own lives and families are part of larger, more general changes taking place in Australia and in many other countries.

PIC 4

We don't have to think very far back in time to remember when this was a fairly accurate picture of life in Australia. In those days **many men** would have **started paid work by the time they were fifteen or sixteen** and would **work full-time until they were at least 65 years old.** They would tend to stay in **one occupation or industry for most of their lives.** It was not uncommon for them to work for the same employer for perhaps thirty or forty years.

Women would also start paid employment **at a fairly early age, but** many of them would **leave** employment either **when they got married or when they had children** and become full-time unpaid workers. (In some jobs women were required to leave when they married).

PIC 5

The paid work force and the **world of employment** looked pretty much like this picture on the front cover of an Australian Bureau of Statistics publication from the 1960s. Many men **worked in manual occupations** or trades, **many** of them, like the one we see here, **in manufacturing industry** which was protected by a system of **tariffs** that gave Australian products an advantage over those produced overseas.

A few men, like the one sitting at the desk in this picture, worked as managers, as clerks or in other white collar occupations.

The very **marginal position of women in the work force** is obvious in the picture. She is not even important enough to have her own desk, but simply has a small workspace tacked on to her boss's desk. Then, even more than now, women tended to work in a **narrow range of occupations** - as clerical workers, as shop assistants, nurses, hairdressers, perhaps as teachers.

Many of our social and economic structures and arrangements were built on these kinds of patterns. We have generally **assumed**, at least until fairly recently, that **at least one** (usually male) **member of each household would be in full-time employment and that the income they received from that employment would be enough to ensure** that all members of the household had a **reasonably adequate standard of living.**

In other words, we have relied on employment as the main means for distributing income and for ensuring the welfare of most people. Of course, this meant that there had to be enough jobs for everyone who needed one and that those jobs provided enough income for people to live on.

For many years this principle was enshrined in government policy and in our industrial relations system. **Governments,** from the end of World War II until the mid-1970s **saw full employment as their main goal** and as something which government had a responsibility to ensure, even though full employment was for many years considered to mean employment for men.

In our industrial relations system the **'Family Wage' decision**, which was handed down by the Commonwealth Arbitration system in 1907, established the principle that **wages should be based on adequacy and need** not just on economic circumstances or the profitability of the employer. In this decision Justice Higgins ruled that the basic wage should be set at an amount adequate to support a worker, his wife and three children.

The emphasis placed on employment also affected the way our **welfare system** developed. Social security payments were designed to provide a **safety net** for those breadwinners who because of **age, illness or injury** were unable to provide for themselves and their families through employment.

Unemployment benefits were set up to support people for relatively short periods of time. It was thought that **relatively few people would be unemployed at any one time** and that **individuals** would be **unemployed for only a short period.** As recently as the early 1970s a person was considered to be long term unemployed if they were unemployed for six weeks or more.

But a lot of things have changed over the past twenty years.

PIC 6

Unemployment

This graph shows the unemployment rate for Australia from 1967 to 1992. As you can see, for most of the period up **until the early 1970s unemployment rarely rose above 3%**. But with the **recession in the early 70s unemployment shot up dramatically**, started to come down much more slowly, then shot up even higher when the 1982-83 recession hit. Again it began to come down, but only until the most **recent recession** in 1989-90 when it **rose to over 11%. After each recession the unemployment rate comes down but not as fast as it rose and it has never quite got back below the point it was at when the recession began.**

Long term unemployment, which is now defined as 12 months or more, **has also risen** over this period. In June 1995 8.3% of the work force, or 751,400 people, were unemployed. Of these 33.5%, or 243,100, had been unemployed for 12 months or more. Many others were underemployed, that is were working fewer hours than they wanted. These figures do not include those who may have given up looking for employment.

PIC 7

Australia is not alone in having **these problems**. They are **shared to varying degrees by all of the economically developed countries.** This graph compares the unemployment rate in Australia with the average unemployment rate in the developed countries from 1967 to 1992.

As we saw from the previous graph, recessions and the usual economic ups and downs are only part of the reason for this. There are also deeper structural changes taking place.

Globalisation

The first of these is what is called **globalisation or internationalisation. National boundaries mean much less** than they used to **for where and how goods are produced.** For example, a car which is assembled in Australia will probably be made up of parts which have been made in a number of different countries. New technology has made it much **easier for companies to spread their operations across different countries.** It is just as quick and easy for information to be entered into a computer in Singapore as in Australia.

Manufacturing industry has declined in most of the developed countries and is increasingly located in newly industrialising countries, especially in Asia, where wages are often lower (sometimes as little as $1 per hour) and where there are large numbers of unskilled workers. The **manufacturing industry** which remains in Australia uses more technology and fewer people to produce goods.

Service industries are now the largest and fastest growing sector of employment.

Technology

PIC 8

New technology has meant that **many of the jobs which were available in the past have disappeared.** This picture shows an office of the past and one which you would see today. With people linked up and able to communicate by computer there is little need for the office messenger of yesteryear. And with more people entering their work directly onto the computer on their desk, the old typing pool is rapidly disappearing.

In car manufacturing, mechanical robots now perform many tasks previously undertaken by people.

Nature of work

These trends are not just affecting the number of jobs available. They are **also changing the nature of the work which we do.** We are seeing, for example, a change from **manual work to mental work**. More people are working in 'white-collar' service jobs and fewer in the so-called 'unskilled' blue-collar occupations.

PIC 9

Organisation of work

The way in which much paid work is organised has also changed. **A much higher proportion** of employment is **part-time and casual** rather than full-time and permanent. In **1966** only **10%** of people **worked part-time.** Today that figure **has more than doubled** and part-time work accounts for nearly one quarter of all employment.

The increase in part-time work might have come about partly because it suits many of the women who are now in the work force - it makes it easier for women to balance their work and family responsibilities. **But many of the people** - both male and female - **who work part-time would prefer to work more hours.**

Most experts agree that the **increase** in part-time work has **more to do with the preferences of employers** than with the preferences of employees. While in the past companies would employ enough people to cope with the busiest times, today they are likely to hire just enough people to cope with less busy times and to hire part-time or casual workers to fill the gaps in busy times.

Also, people are more likely to be employed part-time in many of the areas where employment is growing. Some services work, such as in restaurants for example, lends itself to part-time work.

The old idea of the **'normal' nine to five Monday to Friday working week is disappearing** as more people work different hours and times.

PIC 10

Distribution of work

The distribution of work has also changed. A much **larger proportion of women are in the paid work force**, mainly because many more married women stay in or re-enter the work force after having children. At the same time the **proportion of men who are in the paid work force has fallen.** This is mainly because **fewer young people** - male and female - are in the work force and because **older men are leaving the work force earlier** either voluntarily or involuntarily. Full-time paid jobs for young people aged 15 to 19 years have virtually disappeared and young people in this age group are staying longer at school.

For men paid work now takes place during a shorter period over their lifetime; for women paid work now continues over a longer period.

Whilst many people cannot find enough paid employment, others could be said to be suffering from overwork. Average **working hours for men** in full-time employment have actually **increased over the past ten years.** About one quarter of them now work more than 50 hours per week. Although **women** have **increased** their **participation in paid employment**, this has **not** been **matched by a reduction** in the amount of **unpaid work** which they do and many are now carrying the burden of a **'double shift'** of paid and unpaid work. Many **families**, especially if they have young children, are **battling to balance** the demands of two **paid jobs with family responsibilities.**

We are seeing a growing gap in our society between the increased number of families in which both partners are employed and the increased number in which no adult is employed.

Employment conditions

The way in which employment conditions are decided is another area in which there have been big changes. **In the past awards** covered all people in a particular occupation and **wages were set**, as we have seen, **with** some **consideration for how much people needed** to have a reasonable standard of living.

We have **now** moved toward a system of **enterprise bargaining** in which workers in a particular company negotiate with their employers over wages and working conditions. In **Victoria** new laws have made it **possible for employers to negotiate with individual workers** rather than with the work force as a whole.

The **profitability** of the individual company and its **ability to compete internationally** are now **bigger considerations** in setting wage levels and, to a certain degree, the idea of **need** is **given less weight.**

There has been a **growth in the proportion of jobs which are** relatively **low paid.** At the same time we have seen an **increase in the proportion** of jobs which are relatively **high paid.**

STEP 4 LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The purpose of this activity is to find out from participants what they think the future will be like in relation to work and what this might mean for our society. You will need to summarise these views and link them to an outline of the views which have been expressed more generally in the community 1.40 pm

ACTIVITY

→ **Ask participants to talk about what they think the future will look like in relation to work and income.** What do they think will be different? **List these ideas down one side of a sheet of butchers paper which has been divided into three columns.** Leave a bit of space between each item on the list. (The butchers paper should stay on the wall for the rest of the session).

You should encourage participants to talk about what they expect the future to be like rather than how they would like it to be.

HINT

One way to do this is to **ask people what they think life will be like for young people** who started secondary school this year. You may want to prompt discussion by asking people to talk about:

- What will work be like?
- How will work be shared or distributed?
- Will everyone have paid work?
- Will everyone need paid work?
- How will people get the money or other resources which they will need to get by?
- What about the work that is currently unpaid?

→ **Quickly go through each of the items on the list and ask people to say whether they think that this is a good thing or a bad thing or whether there are both good and bad aspects of it. List the positive aspects in one column and the negative in another.** 1.50 pm

HINT

You might **ask participants** to think particularly about **what each item might mean for**

- Living standards - will everyone have a reasonably adequate income?
- Whether or not everyone will have a meaningful place in the mainstream of society.
- How we will balance work and other aspects of our lives.
- Women's lives and the position of women in society.
- The kind of society we will have in future - equal or unequal, divided or cohesive.

DRAW TOGETHER THE THREADS

Briefly **summarise** the things which people have said, taking care to reflect the different views which may have been expressed. **Outline** the possibilities and concerns which have been expressed in the community more generally. **You may find it easiest to use the prepared outline on the opposite page.** 2 pm

Example

DRAWING TOGETHER THE THREADS

A range of views have been expressed in Australia and overseas about what the changes taking place in relation to work might mean for the future.

Many are concerned that we will have an **increasingly unequal and divided society. A large number of people** will be **unable to find employment** and will become permanently locked out of the mainstream of society. **Some** will be **unable to earn enough from employment** to avoid poverty and will become part of a growing 'working poor'. At the other end of the spectrum, a **relatively privileged and highly-skilled group** will enjoy **high wages,** job security and **good working conditions.** There is a concern that, as well as the negative effects on individuals, this kind of future would have **negative effects on our society as a whole**. It would result in many people

feeling alienated from society, it would erode our sense of common purpose as a community and could lead to the kind of **social upheaval** which we see in some of the cities in the United States or the United Kingdom.

Some of those who hold this view believe that **appropriate policies can** be designed to **ensure that there is enough employment** for everybody, but disagree about what these policies might be. **Some suggest** that it can be done by encouraging the growth of new industries. Some argue that **more jobs would be created if wages and other costs to industry were reduced** whilst **others** suggest that **this would increase inequality and reduce employment** because people would have less to spend. **Some** people **argue** that there is **plenty of work which needs to be done**, in hospitals, schools and communities and that **government should actively create employment** in these areas.

Another view is that the **problem is** not that there is not enough employment but that **we need to distribute the available work more equally.** Reductions in working hours, especially for those working very long hours would be one way of achieving this, it is argued.

Others, however, argue that policy will not solve the problem of unemployment. They **suggest that, if significant numbers of people are going to be unemployed, we need to find other ways for them to participate in society**, perhaps through voluntary work. We may also need to change our values so that a wider range of activities, including unpaid caring work, are given greater recognition and paid employment does not play such a central role in how we see ourselves and are seen by other people.

Yet another view is that the changes currently taking place give us an opportunity to free ourselves from work, or at least some kinds of work. Technology can eliminate many boring or dangerous jobs and free people up for more rewarding work. It provides us with the ability to produce all that we need while working less. The purpose of technology, they suggest, is to free us from work and allow us to participate more fully in other activities such as creative and leisure pursuits and the real issue is how we ensure that work and resources are fairly shared.

You can probably think of other views which have been put forward about what the future will be like and how we should try to shape our future. In thinking about these you might want to **consider what the various options mean in relation to the issues we were talking about a moment or two ago**. What might they mean in terms of :

- ➜ Living standards - will everyone have a reasonably adequate income?
- ➜ Whether or not everyone will have a meaningful place in mainstream of society.
- ➜ How we will balance work and other aspects of our lives.
- ➜ Women's lives and the position of women in society.
- ➜ The kind of society we will have in future - equal or unequal, divided or cohesive.

STEP 5 SHAPING OUR FUTURE

The previous activity encouraged participants to discuss what they expect the future to be like. The purpose of this activity is to encourage participants to discuss the kind of future they want and what we can do to achieve that future. You will need to have butchers paper and pens available for when participants break into small groups. 2.05 pm

HINTS
You might want to **list** these **questions** on the whiteboard or on a sheet of butchers paper **where they can be seen** by the groups. **Check** that **participants understand** /feel comfortable with what they are to do in the small groups before they break up. **Encourage participants** to toss in their ideas freely. Ask **each group to nominate one person to list their ideas** on butchers paper for reporting back to the larger group. You may want to wander from group to group to check that they are getting on all right or to give them a hand to get started.

ACTIVITY

→ **Ask participants to break into small groups of three or four people and to spend about five minutes discussing each of the following questions:**

- **What would you like the future to be like** in terms of the kinds of things we have been discussing?
- **What needs to happen** to make that a reality?
- **What things do we need to avoid** for the future?
- **What can / might they do** to help shape the kind of future they would like to see?

→ **Bring participants back into one group.** 2.25 pm

→ Ask each group to **report back** on those things which they want to see for the future / **what they want the future to be like. List these on butchers paper.**

→ **Ask participants to look at both this list and the list which was made before breaking into small groups.** These lists show the things which people would like to see happen and the things which they do not want to see happen in the future. 2.45 pm

→ **Ask participants to suggest what needs to be done/can be done to achieve the future we want and** what can be done to **avoid the negatives** which have been listed. **List suggestions on butchers paper.**

HINT
Try to get participants to **identify who they think is responsible for taking action** in the areas which they identify. **What** things should or **could be done by**
-government -employers -unions
-local communities -individuals
Also encourage participants to suggest **what they can do themselves and what can be done in the areas in which they are involved;** e.g. workers in neighbourhood houses could be asked how neighbourhood houses should respond to the issues which they have been discussing.

STEP

6 WINDING UP

2.55 pm

- Briefly summarise what has been achieved through the session.
- Let participants know that the kit contains additional material which can be used as a starting point for further discussion(s).
- Give participants a chance to talk about what they have got out of the session and any suggestions they may have for further discussions or activities.
- Thank participants for their participation and close the session.

Example

WINDING UP

Unfortunately it's **time** for us **to wind up** this session. I'm sure that we could go on discussing these issues for a very long time and you **might want** to think about whether you want to **arrange some opportunities for further discussion.**

Over the past couple of hours we have looked at the big changes which are re-shaping work and our relationship to it. We have looked at what these changes might mean for our future. Most importantly, we have discussed what sort of future we want - what we want to see happen and what we want to avoid - and the kinds of things which need to be done if our vision for the future is to become a reality. Hopefully we all feel better equipped to play our part in shaping that future.

The **ideas and views which you have expressed** today are **important and valuable**. Organisations like the Brotherhood of St Laurence, which produced the kit we have been using, are trying to adress the challenges which we face for the future.

But we shouldn't, of course, leave it all up to groups like the Brotherhood to work for the kind of future which we want to see. I think it is clear from our discussion today that the kinds of **changes which are taking place** and the ways in which we respond to them **will have a big effect on all of us** and that **there are things which all us of** can do in our own lives and our own communities to influence and shape the future. We can, for example, talk to our neighbours or co-workers, write to politicians, educate our community, try to do something about unemployment in our local area or simply make sure that we ourselves are informed about what is happening.

This kit contains information about what various groups and communities are doing about these issues and you might want to look at that if you are thinking about what else you might do. The kit **also** contains **material which can be used as a starting point for further discussions** should you want to do some further talking about some of the specific things which have been raised today.

Before we close the session **is there anything** which **you would like to** say about what you have got from this discussion, about what you would like to see happen from here or about anything else?

Finally, **thank you for your participation** in the discussion today. I think that it has been very valuable.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF ST LAURENCE
FUTURE OF WORK PROJECT

THE FUTURE OF WORK

The Brotherhood of St Laurence is a Victorian-based community welfare agency which provides a range of services for low-income people including material aid and emergency relief; residential and day centre services for older people; family support and child care services; and employment and training programs. The Brotherhood's mission commits it to working with and for those who are most disadvantaged and for the achievement of social justice. It does so not only through the provision of services which meet immediate needs, but also through research, policy development and advocacy aimed at understanding and eliminating the causes of poverty and disadvantage.

Through the Future of Work Project the Brotherhood is examining the changes which are re-shaping work in Australia and the implications of these changes for the Australian community. The Brotherhood's purpose in undertaking the Project is to identify how we can shape our shared future so as to :

- improve the position of those who are, or are likely to be, most disadvantaged and marginalised;
- prevent the creation of new forms of disadvantage and inequality; and
- ensure that all Australians have an adequate standard of living and a meaningful place in society.

Three broad strands of activity are being undertaken through the Project:

- research and policy development projects;
- a program designed to foster community dialogue and discussion; and
- demonstration projects designed to pilot or model ways in which we might generate more and better employment for the future.

The Project has benefited from the support of three eminent patrons - Dr H C Coombs, Ms Lillian Holt and, until his passing, the late Professor Ronald Henderson. The Project also benefits from advice provided by an expert advisory committee comprising knowledgable people from business, the trade union movement, research and academic institutions and the community welfare sector. The Future of Work Project is generously supported by the Body Shop. Financial support has also been received from the Victorian Women's Trust, the William Buckland Foundation, the Flora and Frank Leith Trust, the William Buckland Foundation, the Mercantile Mutual Foundation, Wardley's and North Pty Ltd.

A number of publications have been produced through the Future of Work Project and further publications are still to be released. Publications currently available or to be released in the near future are:

- *Reading the signs. A review of factors affecting the future of work in Australia.*
  A valuable resource for readers looking for a clear guide to the factors likely to shape the future of work. It canvasses past, present and likely future trends in paid and unpaid work, workforce participation, unemployment and incomes as well as the key issues raised by these trends.
- *Signposts for future employment.*
  Documents a number of case studies which tell us something about how we might generate employment for the future through new services, new enterprise models and local or regional approaches.
- *Local and regional employment development initiatives.* (working title)
  Reviews Australian and overseas experience of co-operatives; community enterprises; and local and regional economic development. It examines what this experience tells us about creating jobs for the future.
- *Community enterprises.* (working title)
  Examines the potential of community owned enterprises to generate jobs for the future. It identifies the key requirements which must be met if community enterprises are to be a viable means of creating employment.

To purchase publications or for information about the Future of Work Project contact Tania O'Donnell, Brotherhood of St Laurence, 67 Brunswick St, Fitzroy. 3065. Ph: (03) 9483-1383. Fax: (03) 9417-2691

BROTHERHOOD
BROTHERHOOD OF ST LAURENCE

THE FUTURE OF WORK

AN OVERVIEW

1 INTRODUCTION

The way in which work is organised, distributed, valued and rewarded is fundamental to the way we live and the kind of society which we fashion for ourselves. It plays a crucial role in determining the circumstances of individuals and families - their material well-being, their opportunities for meaningful social interaction and participation, their health and emotional well-being; in broad terms their quality of life. It generates particular patterns of social and economic power, of inclusion and exclusion, of privilege and disadvantage. It is vitally important in determining the degree to which we have a fair, inclusive and cohesive society as compared to a highly polarised society in which inequality, poverty and marginalisation of a significant portion of the population place severe strains on the social fabric.

Substantial social, economic and technological changes are currently contributing to a re-shaping of work and of the distribution of income in Australia. These changes represent one of the most important challenges facing the Australian community as we move forward into the next century. The way in which we respond to this challenge will determine not only how we will work, but also more broadly how we will live and the kind of society which we will create for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren.

This paper outlines :

- the ways in which past patterns of work have shaped key social and economic institutions and arrangements in Australia;
- the changes which are taking place in relation to work and the factors which are driving these changes;
- key implications of these changes; and
- some responses which might be appropriate and desirable.

It is important to recognise that we do have the capacity and the responsibility to influence and shape our future. The Brotherhood of St Laurence considers that in assessing our options for the future we should be guided by the need to strive for a society in which all Australians are assured of :

- a fair and equitable share of income, resources and time;
- an adequate standard of living commensurate with community standards in a developed and relatively rich country;
- a meaningful place in society and equitable opportunities for meaningful and rewarding social participation and interaction;
- equitable opportunities for and means of participating in and contributing to the life of the community;
- equitable opportunities to maximise their potential and capacity for self-determination; and
- equitable capacity to structure their lives (possibly in different ways at different times) so as to achieve a reasonable balance between paid work, unpaid work, time spent with family and friends, community involvement, leisure, creative and spiritual pursuits.

2 WHERE ARE WE COMING FROM?

Many of our social and economic institutions and arrangements were forged in circumstances radically different from those which currently prevail.

The three decades following World War II in Australia have been viewed as a kind of 'golden age' of full employment and high standards of living. This golden age rested on a particular set of social arrangements. A key feature of these arrangements was a reliance on paid employment, coupled with transfers between family members, as the primary way of distributing income and ensuring the material well-being of individuals and families. Underlying this were a number of social, economic and political assumptions and arrangements :

- a commitment to the goal of full employment as the cornerstone of public policy, together with a belief that government could and should pursue appropriate economic policies in pursuit of this goal. For almost thirty years, until the early 1970s this commitment was met - official measures of unemployment rarely rose above 2-3 per cent.
- an in principle commitment to the proposition that full-time employment should provide an adequate living income, as exemplified in the 1907 Harvester or Family Wage decision which incorporated the concepts of need and adequacy as fundamental considerations in wage fixing in Australia.
- a linking of the maintenance of full employment and adequate wages to tariff protection of Australian industry (Wheelwright 1989).
- an income support system conceived as providing a minimum safety net for male breadwinners who, because of age or disability, were unable to obtain income from employment; for widowed women who had been deprived of a male breadwinner; and for the assumed small number of men who might be briefly unemployed at any particular time.

- particular patterns of and expectations about family structure and the roles of men and women. The dominant paradigm was one of a nuclear family in which resided a male breadwinner responsible for providing income and a female housewife responsible for the other needs of the family. Men could expect to start paid work by the time they were fifteen or sixteen (later for the minority who undertook higher education) and to remain in employment until at least the age of sixty-five. Many could expect to work in one occupation or industry for most of their lives. Women could also expect to enter the workforce at a fairly early age, but were far more likely to leave employment either upon marriage or when they had children.

Virtually all elements of this mosaic have changed or have been substantially affected by the fundamental structural changes which have occurred or become evident in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

3 KEY FACTORS DRIVING CHANGE

Economic change

World War II was followed in Australia by a long boom period of economic growth and prosperity which continued until the early 1970s. Since 1974, however, we have had shorter bursts of economic growth punctuated by economic slow downs and recessions. During this period the yearly rate of growth per head of population has been around 2 per cent lower than in the period from 1960 to 1973 (Langmore and Quiggin 1994, p.26).

Slow downs in economic activity have contributed to a reduction in the demand for labour to well below that required to accommodate the increased number of people seeking paid work. Between 1973 and 1992 employment increased by an annual rate of 1.5per cent while the labour force grew by 2 per cent per annum. Consequently, as Langmore and Quiggin note, "...the economy generated little more than two-thirds of the necessary jobs over this period" (1994, p.30). However, economic slow downs and recessions have largely reflected and exacerbated deeper structural changes which are driving the re-shaping of work.

Internationalisation

National economies are increasingly more interdependent. Production and consumption of goods and services are less confined by national boundaries. Various components of one product are produced and assembled in different countries and, with modern computer technology, a range of services can be provided from around the globe. The growth of multinational and transnational enterprises has also meant that there has been a growing internationalisation of the labour market with companies able to relocate operations to where costs are lower.

Manufacturing (especially labour intensive manufacturing) is increasingly located in newly industrialising countries. In the industrially advanced countries, on the other hand, manufacturing's share of total employment is declining. In Australia manufacturing's share of total employment fell from 17.9 per cent in 1983-84 to 14.5 per cent in 1991-92 (Bureau of Industry Economics 1994). Service industries now comprise the largest and fastest growing sector of employment.

Greater international mobility of capital, assisted by financial deregulation and technological change, has further contributed to internationalisation and to Australia's increased vulnerability to economic events. Government has responded to these developments by progressively removing tariff and other industry protection and by trying to encourage an increase in the volume and value of Australian exports.

The operation of business

Increased competition and pressure on profit margins together with changes in management philosophy have led companies to increasingly focus on core activity; to contract out or buy in functions previously performed in-house by a permanent workforce; and to increase their use of casual and contracted staff. There has also been greater emphasis on more flexible use of the workforce accompanied by changes to conditions of work such as a move away from the standard working day and the standard working week.

Technological change

Technological change has contributed to a reduction in some areas of the number of people required to produce a given amount of goods and to a loss of some unskilled jobs. It has also been associated with a change in the nature of paid work from manual to mental work and a consequent focus on education, training and skill development.

Employment prospects for 'low skilled', low educated workers have declined as a result of technological change but have improved for many highly educated, highly skilled people. Many of those jobs which previously provided entry points into the labour market (e.g. office messenger) have disappeared. In addition, new technologies have altered the nature of some occupations, especially in areas such as clerical and administrative work.

Social and demographic change

Social and demographic changes have been associated with significant changes in the composition of the workforce and in workforce participation patterns and with a growing diversity of family arrangements.

Labour force participation patterns

Changes in women's aspirations and in social attitudes, the alleviation of barriers to women's employment and shifts in the demand for labour have contributed to a significant increase in the proportion of women in the labour force from less than thirty per cent immediately after the World War II to more than fifty per cent (Young 1990; Shaver 1993). Married women account for virtually all of this increase - they increased their participation from 29 per cent to 53 per cent between 1966 and 1992 (Shaver 1993) and their participation rate now exceeds that for women as a whole. However, the increase in women's employment has been overwhelmingly in part-time employment.

Male participation rates have fallen from 84 per cent in 1966 to around 73 per cent at present, largely as a result of very significant declines for older males and for those aged 15-19 years. Nonetheless, Australia continues to have one of the highest male participation rates amongst OECD countries.

Changes in the structure of the Australian economy have had the effect of increasing employment in areas in which women have traditionally been concentrated and reducing employment in areas of male employment. The Office of EPAC has estimated that around two-thirds of the growth in female employment between 1983 and 1992 can be attributed to the difference in occupational trends and one-third to factors such as reduced career discrimination and increased desire among women to remain in the workforce (EPAC 1992).

The disappearance of entry level jobs, the collapse of the full-time labour market for young people, and increased education retention rates have contributed to a significant decline in the workforce participation rate for young people.

Increased diversity in families

There has been an increase in the diversity of families. A variety of arrangements exists including dual-earner couples both employed full-time; couples with one partner working full-time and the other part-time; couples with both partners unemployed or jobless; and sole parent households. The 'typical' family comprising husband in full-time employment, wife outside the labour force and caring for dependent children is no longer dominant. Indeed, by 1989 such families constituted less than one-third of families with dependent children. Cass and Cappo note that :

...of all Australian families, only 21 per cent are composed of a couple where the woman is not in paid work, and for families with dependent children, the figure is only 30 per cent.

(Cass and Cappo 1994, p.8)

Between 1983 and 1993 the proportion of married couple families with both partners in the workforce increased from 41 per cent to 51 per cent and the proportion with only one partner in the workforce fell from 41 per cent to 29 per cent. Of married couples with dependent children 58 per cent had both partners in the workforce in 1993 (Department of Social Security 1993, p.10).

The number of sole parent families has increased significantly, most having been formed as a result of separation, divorce or the death of a spouse and the great majority female headed (McClelland 1994a).

Fifteen per cent of all Australian families with children are now headed by sole parents. Thirty per cent of all children will spend at least part of their childhood in a sole parent family.

(Australian Council of Social Service 1994, p.10)

Sole parent breadwinners have higher level of joblessness and unemployment than those in two-parent households with children. Even when in full-time work, sole parents' earnings are only three-quarters of workers in the average two parent family (Australian Council of Social Service 1994, p.10).

The pattern of the man employed full-time continuously for forty or more years and the woman withdrawing from employment after the arrival of children is changing. Both men and women are less likely to work full-time continuously and more likely to experience changes of employment, to withdraw from the labour force for a period (either voluntarily or involuntarily), and to work varied hours.

Political change

The development, during the 1970s of 'stagflation', that is the simultaneous existence of unemployment and inflation, undermined confidence in the Keynesian economics which had underpinned public policy in the post-War period and led to questioning of the degree to which government can, or should, intervene in the economy in pursuit of full employment. Since 1974 governments have moved away from the commitment to full employment as the key objective of public policy and have placed higher priority on the reduction of inflation.

4
IMPACTS AND EFFECTS

These changes have had wide ranging impacts and effects on the Australian labour market and on Australian society more generally.

Unemployment

Since the early 1970s we have experienced persistently high levels of unemployment, peaking at 11.3 per cent in December 1992. In comparison, the average rate of unemployment in the 1960s was 1.8 per cent (Gregory 1993a). After each successive post-war recession the unemployment rate has never returned to the same level as at the end of the previous recession. Currently despite strong economic growth the official unemployment rate stands at 8.8 per cent and the number of people who are unemployed at 784,500 (ABS 1995). This number is increased when hidden unemployment is taken into account.

The duration of unemployment has also increased rising from an average of 26 weeks in August 1978 to 57 weeks in August 1993 (van der Schoot 1994). In December 1994 over 278,000 people, or 34.5 per cent of those officially unemployed had been unemployed for twelve months or more and more than half of them (157,000) had been unemployed for two years or more.

The cost of unemployment to individuals and families and its impact on individual and family well-being has been well documented (Jackson and Crooks 1993; Langmore and Quiggin 1994), as have the budgetary and economic costs to the nation (Dixon 1992; Langmore and Quiggin 1994; EPAC 1992).

Unemployment has not been evenly distributed across the whole of the population. It has been particularly severe for low-paid and low-skilled people, young people, Aboriginal Australians, those from a non-English speaking background, and amongst families in which there is already a family member who is not employed or not in the work force. Female sole parents also have very high rates of unemployment. Teenagers and young adults have the highest rates of long-term unemployment, although the duration of unemployment is longest for older men (35-54 years of age).

Nor has unemployment been evenly spread geographically. Many regions have experienced very high levels of unemployment. These include those parts of our capital cities (such as areas of western Sydney and the north-west of Melbourne) in which older manufacturing industries have been concentrated and some rural areas and provincial cities which have also been disproportionately affected by structural change.

Many families with children have been hard hit by unemployment. In December 1994, of those families in which children under 15 years of age were present, 333,300 had no adult employed (ABS 1994b).

Employment

There have been significant changes in the nature, distribution and structure of employment.

Nature of employment

The nature of the work which people undertake through employment has changed quite fundamentally as a result of dramatic change in the structure of the Australian economy over the past twenty years.

In the period from 1966 to 1992 total employment in agriculture, mining and manufacturing fell from 35 per cent of the work force to 18 per cent while the work force doubled (Langmore and Quiggin 1994). Despite growth in manufactured exports the relative decline in manufacturing employment is likely to continue and the shift in employment shares toward the services sector is expected to continue (EPAC 1992).

Employment patterns within the services sector are very different to the traditional employment patterns in manufacturing. Manufacturing employment was and is primarily full-time and whilst there may be a higher number of people employed in the services sector these jobs are in many cases part-time and casual.

Structure of employment

The traditional model of full-time lifetime employment (at least for men) has been challenged by fundamental and long-term changes in the labour market. These include :

- a more than doubling of the proportion of people who work part-time from 10 per cent in 1966 to currently around one-quarter of all people in paid employment. The proportion of men employed part-time increased over this period from four per cent to 11 per cent while the proportion of women employed part-time increased from 24 per cent to 42 per cent (ABS 1994b).
- an increase in casual employment from less than 16 per cent of employment in 1982 to 22 per cent in 1993 (Department of Social Security 1993). There is, in addition, a question as to whether, as a result of changed economic circumstances and changes in business practice, even permanent employment has become less secure than in the past.
- a relative decline in full-time employment. The number of men employed full-time as a proportion of the male population is 20 per cent lower than it was 20 years ago and for women 10 per cent lower (Gregory 1993b).

While part-time employment may suit the preferences of many of the married women who have constituted the bulk of the increase in the labour force, most analysts agree that the increase in part-time employment is primarily a result of the preferences of employers (EPAC 1992). The proportion of part-time workers who would prefer to work more hours has doubled from around 14 per cent in 1978 to around 28 per cent in 1994 (ABS 1994b).

Many of the changes in the way in which paid work is organised have been considered to be linked to the need for greater flexibility for both employers and employees. Further examples of this flexibility include increased spread of hours, seven day rosters and annualised hours arrangements. These kinds of arrangements have been facilitated by the shift to enterprise bargaining in the industrial relations system.

Whilst these changes have been beneficial for some workers, there are signs that they have not been universally so. There is some disturbing evidence that enterprise agreements have resulted in less rather than greater control by women over their hours of work, thus restricting their capacity to juggle their paid and unpaid work; and that the introduction of changes, such as seven day rosters, in male areas of work may be reducing the capacity of men to participate in family life (Hall and Frum 1994; Gibson 1993). An analysis of the impact of a seven day roster in mining communities in central Queensland found that the majority of both women and men considered that it had a negative effect on themselves, their families and the relationships within their families (Gibson 1993). Particular problems arose in families with children where women took on extra household work and fathers had less contact with their children than before because school, child-care and social engagements did not fit comfortably with the demands of the seven day roster.

A study of the banking industry found that part-time staff rarely received pro-rata entitlements to leave or training and found it much more difficult to gain access to child-care as compared with full-time employees (Barlow, Junor and Patterson 1993). Another study found that in the retail industry the substitution of part-time work for full-time jobs and casual jobs led to a reduction in earnings and flexibility on the part of employees (Deery and Mahony 1994).

Ironically some working time arrangements which might be regarded as flexibility at the option of the employee tend to be more common for males than females. Thirty four per cent of males are entitled to rostered days off as compared with 20 per cent of women, who are also less able

to negotiate start and finish times when in full-time employment; 24 per cent of male full-time employees were able to make daily variations to their start and finish times as compared with 19 per cent female full-time employees with the differential much the same for those with children under the age of twelve - 27 per cent of males and 23 per cent of females (ABS 1993).

Distribution of work

The number of people in the labour force as a proportion of the population has increased significantly since the late 1960s and there have been substantial changes in the distribution of employment:

- there are now 7.5 women in the workplace for every ten men (ABS 1994b). The industries in which employment has increased are largely those in which women have tended to predominate and in which part-time employment is more prevalent. This together with substantial job losses in industries which have been the predominant providers of male full-time employment and the general relative decline in full-time employment has contributed to the changing gender composition of the workforce.
- whilst the number of dual earner families has increased so too has the number of families in which no adult is employed. As a result of unemployment and joblessness, in 1993 17 per cent of families with dependent children had no member in employment (Cass and Cappo 1994).
- pathways into employment for young people have become blocked by a lack of entry points as a result of factors previously discussed and of increased emphasis on attributes such as rapid adaptation to changing circumstances, developed skills and organisational know-how – attributes usually acquired only through workforce experience.
- those who are in full-time employment are working longer hours and this is particularly the case for men. The average working hours of male full-time workers has increased over the past 10 years to just over 40 hour a week. The proportion working over 50 hours has increased from 19 per cent to 25 per cent (ACOSS 1994, p.4).

For some over-work may be the result of the increase in low-paid employment and a consequent need to work longer hours in order to obtain an adequate income. For others it may result from a belief that it is necessary to secure their ongoing employment. The increasing use of contract employment may also result in over-work where individuals are contracted to complete a task rather than to complete a set number of hours.

For many women over-work results from a combination of paid work and their unpaid work in the home. One of the few areas of work which has changed very little is the gender disparity in performance of unpaid work in the home. Women's increased participation in paid work has not been matched by a concomitant decrease in the amount of unpaid work which they perform nor by a similar increase in the amount of unpaid work undertaken by men (ABS 1992; Bittman 1994).

As a consequence of these trends there has been a growing polarisation between those who are over-worked and those who are under-employed. The effects on those unable to obtain enough employment have been well-documented. They include financial hardship and poverty, poor health, family stress and adverse effects on the life chances of children.

Those who are over-worked are also under stress. Many family members are under considerable pressure as a result of too much paid and unpaid work, or paid work which they consider to be at the expense of caring work. There are indications that men working longer hours feel under pressure, both physically and in relation to their family responsibilities (Tracy & Lever-Tracy 1991). Well over one-third of employed women with children under 12 years of age say they have difficulty managing paid work and child-care with such difficulties experienced by 46 per cent of mothers who are working full-time. Just under one-quarter of fathers also reported difficulties and a significant number of men and women also experienced problems combining paid work with care or help for family members who are ill, elderly or who have a disability (Cass 1994).

Earnings from employment

Despite the disappearance of many low skilled and entry level jobs there has been an increase in the relative incidence of low-paid work, as well as a decline in the relative value of such work. The Committee on Employment Opportunities noted that since 1976 over 70 per cent of all new jobs have been in the bottom 25 per cent of the male full-time weekly earnings distribution (1993, pp.38-39).

There is an increasing disparity between the incomes of high and low earning employees. Earnings of those at the bottom of the earnings distribution have declined in real terms since 1983, while earnings for those at the top have increased (ABS 1994a).

Early Australian wage determinations were based on the needs of a family and the assumed responsibility of men to make provision for same. It is true that gender wage inequality was institutionalised through this approach. However, the centralised wage system provided protection for most workers of basic wages and conditions and was relatively progressive in the setting of minimum legal wages. There are widely held concerns that the shift towards enterprise bargaining will undermine the capacity of the wages system to maintain real wages and ensure wage equity. There is concern that those most vulnerable in the work force, and less organised, will not gain, and in fact will be relatively worse off, through enterprise bargaining. Whilst studies have shown a strong connection between male and female pay equity and centralised wage fixation recent work suggests that enterprise agreements are likely to generate higher pay rises in male than in female dominated areas (Hall and Fruin, 1994).

Inequality, polarisation and poverty

A key impact has been the trend to greater inequality of incomes in Australia over the 1980s and possibly also in the 1970s (Saunders 1992). The main reason for this has been a less equal distribution of income from employment which is, in turn, the result of unemployment and greater inequality in wages. Greater variations in the earnings of husbands, as well as greater differences in unearned incomes, have been especially important in the increasing inequality of family incomes. In contrast, the earnings of wives and government benefits have reduced inequality (Saunders 1993; Harding 1993).

Of particular concern, therefore, is the fact that increased participation rates for married women have not been evenly spread across families. Women whose spouses are unemployed and not in the labour market have been much less likely to increase their labour force participation than women who have an employed spouse. Women married to unemployed men are 10 times more likely to be unemployed than those married to employed men (Cass and Cappo 1994, p.11).

There has been a growing division between those families with children who have no parent in paid work and those families with both parents in paid work. The combination of greater inequality in family incomes with the growing divisioas between dual earner families and those with no working parent, points to significant polarisation in the experience of children, and of young adults. In the long-term, this polarisation is likely to produce inequalities in the experiences and life chances of children, to aggravate social division and to reduce social cohesion.

Poverty also increased over the 1980s (Saunders 1993; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 1993). The tentative signs that poverty increased even amongst those employed full-time for twelve months of the year (McClelland 1994b) pose a warning about the capacity of the full-time employment of only one breadwinner to raise family incomes above poverty line levels in the future.

5 WHERE ARE WE HEADING?

These trends clearly pose major challenges for Australia. We are confronted with the very real prospect that there will not be enough employment for all those who want and need it and that the income obtained from employment will, for many Australians, be insufficient to ensure an adequate standard of living. We are also confronted with a possible future in which many individuals and families experience increasing difficulty in obtaining an adequate income whilst retaining a balance between work and other important facets of life.

We need a vision for our society – a vision of a society in which all people have an adequate standard of living and a meaningful place; a society in which work, income, resources and opportunities for social participation are fairly shared; a society in which people are able to achieve a reasonable balance between paid work, unpaid work, time spent with family, community involvement, leisure and other activities. The experience in other parts of the world presents a picture of a very different kind of society which may emerge as a result of the trends discussed throughout this paper – a divided society in which a significant portion of the population is locked out of meaningful participation; in which the benefits of economic growth are confined to those who own capital and to those fortunate enough to find employment in a shrinking primary labour market while others are confined to an increasingly marginal and insecure secondary labour market.

We can and must do better.

It has been suggested that policy is increasingly determined by the imperatives and preferences of global forces which have the capacity to make or break national economies. In short, that the capacity of nations to determine their economic and social futures or to develop their own approaches to meeting the challenge of the future of work is severely limited.

We must, of course, recognise the reality that international factors which may be beyond the control of individual nations do condition our choices. It is clear that the fundamental changes which are re-shaping work in Australia are largely international in nature, although their effects are different in the developing world than in the advanced industrialised countries.

Whilst there is some disagreement as to the precise effect which lower wage rates and poorer social conditions in developing countries are having on Australian industry and employment, the threat of competition from these countries is often cited as a reason for reducing Australian wages and living standards. Our emphasis should rather be on improving conditions and living standards in those countries. Australia could take a lead in this regard by seeking to have an appropriate social charter into international agreements such as GATT and APEC. This would be consistent with and could draw on efforts in Europe to develop a social charter for the European Community.

In addition, given the often damaging effects of greatly increased international capital flows, consideration should be given to Australian sponsorship and support of international co-operation in the imposition of some form of levy on foreign exchange transactions.

At the same time, we do have the capacity and the responsibility to influence and shape our future. Some issues which we must address for the future are outlined below.

The role of work in our lives

Paid employment in our society has been viewed as important not only because it is the means by which most people obtain income, but also because, for cultural and historical reasons, it has been perceived as providing people with a sense of self-worth, identity and meaning as well as social status and legitimacy. Within such a value system clearly those without paid work are marginalised and many feel unvalued.

The Brotherhood of St Laurence supports the need for change in our individual and social values in order to embrace a more encompassing understanding of the various components which comprise a full and satisfying life. The Brotherhood is particularly committed to the view that people cannot be measured or valued simply in terms of their 'economic' value or contribution and that each individual, by virtue of his or her existence, is of value.

Whilst recognising the importance of paid work we must also recognise that in order to occupy a meaningful place in society people require sufficient time to pursue goals and responsibilities outside the workplace. The increasing incidence of unsocial hours and the time pressure created by needing to juggle more than one part-time job leaves some with a sense of exclusion from society even though they are more than fully employed.

Wages rates should be adequate to ensure that people are not forced to work excessive hours simply to obtain a minimally adequate standard of living. Equally, the establishment of new work arrangements should provide genuine flexibility for individuals and families rather than exacerbate current difficulties. The impact of new work arrangements on people's lives outside the workplace should be considered in industrial negotiations and tribunals.

Increased working time options may, as well as asssisting people to better manage their lives, play a part in achieving a more equitable distribution of paid employment.

We must be particularly cognisant of the need for people to be able to balance work and family responsibilities. The diversity and flexibility of patterns of work, family life and composition must be recognised by our economic, industrial, social security and taxation policies. The recognition and legitimation of the value and importance of activities other than paid employment should also extend to our income support system. and there has been some progress in this regard.

We must, however, guard against the development of a two-tiered model of citizenship in which those who, by virtue of unemployment, are excluded from the mainstream are consigned to a marginalised model of social participation as an alternative to employment while for the rest of us the model remains unchanged. Our goal should rather be to develop a more flexible and inclusive model of participation which allows all Australians equitable access to paid employment as well as to other means of participating in the life of the community.

As noted, much unpaid work in our society has been greatly undervalued. This has led to calls for the value of such work to be incorporated into the national accounts system. Notional calculation of the value of this work, however, does nothing to address the unequal access to income and resources with which it is associated. Notional recognition of the importance of unpaid work is no substitute for the provision of services which allow women to improve their access to the economic resources of the community and, of course, the provision of such services is an important source of employment.

Employment and economic growth

Employment is, and will continue to be, the primary means through which most people access the income required to support an adequate standard of living. It is therefore essential, if we are to have a fair and cohesive society for the future, that there be enough employment for all those who need or want it. Current trends suggest that without some change in direction or additional measures, the Australian economy will not generate enough employment to achieve this objective.

While sustained economic growth is important for the reduction of unemployment and for the maintenance and improvement of living standards, the type of growth which we promote and the ways in which we promote it will be crucial in determining the distribution of income, resources and opportunities.

It is possible to have both a more efficient and a more equitable economy if we choose our strategies carefully. Indeed the achievement of one can contribute to the achievement of the other. Our capacity to combine economic and employment growth with a reduction in poverty and inequality will depend significantly on the ways in which we combine macro-economic policies with taxation and policies of social expenditure.

We must avoid high rates of interest and large cuts in social expenditure. We should also focus on improving both the quality and the quantity of public and private investment or we will not have sufficient development of industries capable of generating employment opportunities or export earnings. Strategies for investment over the next decade must avoid the mistakes of the 1980s. This will require attention to distortions and deficiencies in the taxation system, particularly in the capital gains tax and the tax treatment of debt.

At the same time, it is clear from trends in Australia and internationally that economic growth per se is not a guarantee of adequate and appropriate employment opportunities and may exacerbate social and economic polarisation. If we are to reduce unemployment and more equitably distribute income and resources the composition - or labour intensity - of growth, rather than simply the quantum, will be an important factor.

Most of the current focus in economic and industry policy is on improving export performance and increasing the competitiveness of the trade-exposed sector in order to improve the balance of payments and maximise national wealth and income. Whilst this is important, our traditional export industries in agriculture and minerals are not highly labour intensive and manufacturing, which has in the past played an important role in distributing income through employment, is becoming increasingly less labour intensive. In the five years to June 1993, manufacturing industry in Australia showed a 4.2 per cent real increase in output but a 21 per cent reduction in employment (Colebatch 1994). The availability of a large pool of relatively cheap unskilled labour in the developing Asia Pacific region means that, barring a very substantial reduction in Australian living standards, Australian industries competing on world markets are likely to increasingly rely on capital intensive modes of production.

This suggests that greater emphasis should be placed on fostering a domestically-oriented, employment-generating sector of the economy to complement the internationally oriented sector. Services will be an important component of such a sector which will play a critical role in distributing income through employment.

We should, in addition, aim to promote growth which generates secure well-paid employment. Low or reduced wages have been promoted in some quarters as a necessary precondition for economic growth. Growth which is premised on low wages, however, runs the risk of exacerbating inequality and poverty and creating a growing category of working poor, as has been the experience in the United States (Castles and Mitchell 1994).

A greater focus on local and regional economic and employment development, particularly in those regions which have been worst affected by unemployment and structural change is needed. In addition, special efforts must be made to assist those who are disadvantaged in the labour market. The quality of assistance provided to unemployed people is especially important and must be improved.

Education and training

It is essential that access to education and training should be equitable. It should not be dependent upon capacity to pay, yet there is disturbing evidence that increased costs associated with schooling are placing heavy pressures on low income families. Special assistance for disadvantaged groups to access education and training are necessary if we are to avoid further entrenchment of disadvantage for the future.

It is also essential that our education and training systems are appropriately geared for the future. They need to respond to the changes which have taken place and which are taking place in the industry structure of employment. This means that training programs need to be clearly linked to an analysis of likely areas of employment growth. It also means that in the context of a competency based training system the range of competencies and skills involved in a services based economy must be better understood, recognised and integrated.

Incomes

All Australians should have access to an income which allows them to maintain an adequate standard of living commensurate with community standards.

Our income support sytem needs to adjust to the realities of the future. In particular, given the growth of part-time and low-paid employment it will need to allow people to more flexibly combine market income and income support. Further investigation of the best means by which our social security system can respond to the range of changes which are re-shaping work is warranted.

At the same time changes in the income support system should not be viewed as an alternative to adequate wage provision. In the United States real reductions in minimum wages have been accompanied by calls for reductions in income support assistance in order to overcome perceived work disincentives. A downward spiral in incomes of this kind will impoverish the whole community and impair our capacity to develop a modern progressive economy.

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BROADER HORIZONS OR NARROWER OPTIONS? GLOBALISATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION.

→ 'The increase in speculative capital means that it is now difficult for a nation state - even the US, the richest economy in the world - to carry out even minimal economic planning.

While capital is now highly mobile, labour is increasingly immobile - and that has immediate consequences. It means that it is easy to shift production to low wage, high repression areas of the world with low environmental standards.'
(Chomsky, 1994)

THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

One of the most significant developments over the past twenty-five years has been the increasing globalisation or internationalisation of economies. This has meant that the economic performance and well-being of individual countries is increasingly enmeshed with and dependent upon economic developments throughout the world.

National boundaries have become less important in determining where goods or services are produced and where they are finally bought. Different parts of one product may be made and assembled in a number of different countries. A company which is based in Australia might produce many of its products in other countries, even those which will eventually be bought in Australian shops.

A number of factors have contributed to the increased globalisation of the economy. These include :

• **The growth of multinational and transnational companies.**

These companies, whilst they may have their headquarters in a particular country, operate in many countries and are likely to have shareholders throughout the world. Their prosperity is less dependent on the economic fortunes of their 'home' country than companies which operate solely or mainly within that country. In some cases, the turnover of an individual transnational corporation may be bigger than the whole economy of a particular country in which it operates. On the other hand, a transnational corporation may be a large part of the economy of a country in which it operates. The activities and decisions of these corporations can have a big impact on national economies. It has been suggested that individual governments have little power to control or influence the activities or decisions of these companies but that transnational corporations, because of the effect their decisions can have on the economy, are able to exert considerable influence on the decisions made by governments.

• Technology and transport

New technology and improvements in transport have made it easier for more goods and services to be traded between countires. Refrigerated containers, for example, mean that foods which in the past would have had to be produced close to where they would be sold, can now be produced anywhere and shipped around the world. Computer technology has made communication easier and allowed companies to more easily operate in a number of locations. It has also meant that a range of tasks can now be performed almost anywhere. It is just as quick and easy for information to be entered on a computer in Singapore as in Australia.

• The push towards free trade

Internationally there has been a push to remove barriers, such as tariffs or subsidies, which might restrict trade between countries. This, it is sometimes argued, will lead to the greatest prosperity for everyone, since countries will produce those things which they are best at or in which they have some competitive advantage. Consequently, resources will be used most efficiently and consumers will benefit from being able to buy the widest range of goods and services at the cheapest prices. 'Free trade' is sometimes also viewed as an important means of avoiding conflict between countries.

• Deregulation of financial markets

In the past many governments placed restrictions on the movement of capital, that is money, shares, bonds and other financial instruments which are traded on financial markets. These included, for example, restrictions on the amount of money which could be transferred out of the country and on the amount of foreign investment allowed in the country. Over recent decades, many of these restrictions have been eased or removed. This process is known as the deregulation of financial markets.

At the same time, new technology has meant that large amounts of capital can be transferred around the world very quickly. The sudden influx or outflow of capital from an economy can have a big effect on that economy and may force governments to change their policies to reverse the trend. Some people have suggested that the greatly increased movement of capital around the world, assisted by deregulation, has meant that financial markets outside the country have more influence over the policies of government than the people who elected those governments.

An important change in Australia has been in the way the value of our dollar - how much it is worth in comparison to the currency of other countries - is set. Previously the Australian Government could, based on its assessment of our economic situation, change the value of the Australian dollar through devaluations or revaluations. A devaluation would mean that the Australian dollar was worth less than it had been in comparison to, for example, the American dollar. This, in turn, would mean that goods exported from Australia would be cheaper in America while goods imported into Australia would be more expensive. In this way governments would try to influence the level of imports and exports and the amount of capital flowing into or out of Australia.

Since the 1980s, however, governments have decided that the value of the dollar should be determined by 'the market', that is, by those who buy and sell on the world's financial markets. This, some people argue, means that we are now judged on our economic performance in relation to the rest of the world and forces us to live 'within our means'. Others suggest that it has simply increased our vulnerability to economic events and to the decisions of financial markets which have no allegiance to Australia.

AUSTRALIA IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

In recent decades Australia has opened itself up more to the rest of the world. This is partly reflected in our immigration policy. The 'White Australia' policy was abandoned in the mid-sixties. In the years that followed Australia had one of the most open immigration policies of all developed nations and as a result has one of the most diverse populations.

More recently Australia has also opened up its markets to overseas competition. This too has meant greater diversity - with a wider range of goods available for consumers. But it has also meant that some of our traditional industries have gone out of business because the goods being imported are cheaper to produce than the equivalent local product. This has been a major cause of unemployment for many people in recent years.

Before the days of 'free trade' Australia had tariffs, that is, taxes which gave Australian products an advantage by making imported products more expensive than they otherwise would have been. Historically Australia relied on the

export of agricultural products and natural resources, such as minerals, to support one of the highest standards of living of all developed countries. Tariff protection was used to expand our industries, especially in manufacturing, with the argument being that because Australia had a relatively small local market it would be disadvantaged if it had to compete against goods from other countries where production occurred on a much bigger scale.

This protected domestic sector provided a secure source of employment. However, it seemed that this situation could not survive the international trend towards deregulation of capital markets and of trade. Once capital could move freely around the world pressure mounted on Australian industries. Pressure increased on Australian firms to increase profits or risk losing investment to other countries.

With the reduction in tariffs some firms faced the threat of cheaper products from other countries where wages and costs were lower. The clothing, textiles and footwear industries were particularly affected by this change. Some Australian and international companies shifted their operations out of Australia and into these lower cost countries. This had drastic impacts in some towns where a large firm had provided most of the jobs and where other industries and businesses relied on that source of employment providing income for the town as a whole.

More generally, the opening up of the Australian economy has been associated with a view that Australian firms across the board need to become more internationally competitive. Opinions differ as to how this can or should be achieved.

Some people argue that the most important thing is to reduce the amount which it costs firms in Australia to produce their products. One way of doing this is to reduce the number of people employed to produce a given amount of goods and this has, indeed, happened in some areas. For example, between 1988 and 1993 manufacturing industry output in Australia increased by 4.2 per cent while the number of people employed in the industry fell by 21 per cent (Colebatch 1994). Another way, it is suggested, is for wages (and living conditions) in Australia to fall to levels which would mean that we could compete with developing countries where wages are often much lower.

Others, however, argue that this approach is undesirable. Reducing wages, working conditions and standards of living simply involves us in a 'race to the bottom' which will impoverish everyone. Much of the reason why imported goods are cheaper, at least in the traditional manufacturing sector, is because labour is cheaper in some countries; and in many cases not just cheaper but extremely exploitative. If we are to have a truly 'level playing field' conditions of employment should be comparable across countries, but rather than reduce standards in countries like Australia we should seek to raise them in developing countries. One approach to this could be to impose penalties on imported goods which do not meet agreed standards in relation to wages and working conditions. This would prevent them from competing unfairly. Another would be to include in international trade agreements target standards for improvements in living standards so that countries do not benefit from freer trade if this is achieved through poor living standards.

These sorts of proposals require that, as the world becomes more integrated economically, new forms of co-operation between governments are developed. In Europe, where the Economic Community has sought to remove all barriers to trade between European countries, there has been a lot of pressure for the inclusion in agreements between countries of standards to ensure that working and social conditions are comparable.

Yet others suggest that it is impractical for Australia to try to compete with low-wage countries. To do so would require very large reductions in wages and living standards in Australia and this cannot realistically be achieved. Rather, we should accept that the kinds of industries which rely on unskilled labour will tend to be located in those countries with a plentiful supply of unskilled, low-paid workers. Australia should focus on the production of high quality goods and on the development of industries which require highly skilled workers. This will mean that the goods which we sell to the world will have a high value and we will be able to maintain relatively high wages and living standards. In other words, we should pursue a high-skill / high-wage strategy rather than a low-skill / low-wage strategy and we should invest in the training which will be needed if we are to do so.

WORK IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

With the greater integration of Australia into the world economy we have seen significant changes in the structure of our industry. These changes occur all the time as consumer tastes change and technology opens up new areas of activity, but they have been more dramatic as a result of globalisation. The changes in Australia's industry structure have resulted in changes in the kind of work which we do and the kinds of jobs which are available.

The biggest changes have been the reduction in the proportion of people who are employed in producing physical goods in areas such as agriculture, mining and manufacturing and the increase in the proportion employed in services. Between 1966 and 1992 the proportion of the work force employed in agriculture, mining and manufacturing fell from 35 per cent to 18 per cent (Langmore and Quiggin, 1994). Employment in manufacturing alone fell from 20 per cent of all employment in 1980 to just over 14 per cent in 1994 (Bureau of Industry Economics 1994). In 1980 there were 1.25 million people employed in manufacturing. In 1994 there were 1.1 million, a fall of between 150,000 and 200,000 thousand jobs.

Consistent with the pattern in other developed countries the services sector has been at the forefront of employment growth since the early eighties. In fact, since 1983, 94 per cent of all employment growth - representing 1.5 million jobs - has been in the services sector. Around 70 per of Australian workers are employed in service industries.

As a result of these developments there has been a shift from manual to mental work and education and training have become increasingly important factors in the opportunities available to individuals. Employment prospects for those with lower skills or less education have declined but have improved for many highly educated and highly skilled people. In addition, many of the new jobs in service industries are quite different from those which were previously available in manufacturing. Whilst some are highly paid, others are not and many provide part-time or casual employment whereas manufacturing jobs were more often full-time.

FOR DISCUSSION

The globalisation of the economy forces us to think very carefully about the kind of society we want for the future. It also in many ways forces us to consider how we see ourselves in relation to the rest of the world and our relationship to people in other countries. A loss of jobs in Australia may lead to greater poverty in this country. It may also result in more jobs being available for poor people in other countries. Globalisation also raises questions about how we ensure, as citizens, that we retain control over our destiny.

1. **What are the benefits of the increased opening up of the Australian economy?**

2. **What are the negative consequences?**

3. **Should Australia's living standards be protected at the expense of less well off countries?**

4. **Are workers in these countries benefitting or are any benefits restricted to international companies?**

5. **What could be done to overcome the negative consequences of globalisation?**

6. **It has been suggested that, in a global economy, it is increasingly important for ordinary people and for organisations such as unions to forge better links with their counterparts in other countries to identify common interests and to work together for a fairer future. Do you agree with this? If so, what could you do to help make this happen?**

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WORKERS IN THE FIRING LINE

by Jan Pearce
The Age, Wednesday 17 April 1991

The neat theories of the neo-classical economists are cold comfort to the female machinists at the Jockey Australia factory in the country town in Maryborough.

Bent over their work with frowns and pursed lips, they race to sew the number of women's and men's briefs they must take to earn the small over-award payment that increases their weekly take-home wage to $290. Now they are also pursued by the fear that their jobs may disappear.

At $8 an hour these women are among Australia's lowest wage earners. But the abolition of import quotas by March 1993 and the progressive halving of tariffs from 50 per cent to 25 per cent by the year 2000 will leave them exposed to the chill of competition from even lower wage earners - Chinese women earning only 33 cents an hour, Fijians at 80 cents an hour and Hong Kong women earning $3.

Women make up 70 per cent of workers in the clothing industry and 55 per cent in textiles and footwear in Australia. They have already borne the brunt of recession job losses. In country Victoria, where many towns depend on clothing factories and textile mills, 608 jobs were lost in these industries in the first nine months of 1990. One of the women I spoke to had come to Jockey after being retrenched from a factory at Beaufort, 55 kilometres away, and Jockey itself recently reduced its work force by more than 100.

As yet no one can accurately predict which factories and mills will survive the Government's dismantling of protection.

However, Sue McCreadie, economic research officer for the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Unions Federation, says that most likely to go are those directly competing with low-wage producers in other countries. Jockey, owned by Pacific Dunlop, is one of these.

Protection has been traditionally criticised for allowing inefficient industries to doze behind its comforting shadow. However, these women work hard to compensate for their labour-intensiveness. They follow a system copied from Japanese car assembly lines - the Just-In-Time method by which teams are formed to respond quickly to orders. To keep up, the women say, you have to push yourself.

The free-marketeers who have laid siege to the Federal Government's economic policies will shed no tears if Jockey closes. Protected industries mean the consumer pays too much for goods, they say. The money the buyer will save on cheaper underwear, for example, will be spent on other goods, creating other jobs, so that, overall there will be no loss of employment.

From the cool distance of theory this may be true.

However, this free market view also assumes that people are interchangeable (the "Lego approach", one critic calls it), that those who lose jobs in one occupation or area are ready and able to take up other kinds of jobs elsewhere. The Maryborough women show that for country women, as for many city migrant women, this theory is flawed.

The women I spoke to are typical of workers in this industry, married, early school leavers, now in their 30s and 40s, semi-skilled (although highly skilled in this particular job), and with family commitments that tie them to the area.

Three of the four women have children at school, and all four are buying the houses they live in.

Lyn Delavedova, 35, has lived in Maryborough since she was 16, and her husband, who was recently retrenched from Jockey after 22 years, has lived there all his life.

Ann Hamilton, 31, and her husband moved to Avoca near Maryborough six years ago to be near family (she, like two of the other women, must travel from another town to work). It took them two years to finds jobs. Mr Hamilton is now out of work again. Mrs Hamilton worries that she will also be unemployed and that they will have to uproot themselves and their three children aged 10, 12

and 13 and go to some other town - not Melbourne, she says, they could never afford to buy a house there.

These women have the potential to train for other work, but in some cases lack the confidence.

Carolyn Whiting, 46, left school even earlier, at 13, to supplement the pension of her grandmother with whom she lived. She was married at 16 and had her first child two years later. "I'm not really educated," she says.

If they were to retrain, are there jobs? Mrs Hamilton tried to improve her job chances by taking a TAFE computer course at night, but had to abandon it when her husband lost his job. Even the small fess were too much with three children to clothe and feed, she said. She would like to continue but what job could she get? In September 1990, there were 41 job vacancies and 1287 out of work in the Maryborough area. Mrs Delavedova recently applied to be a kindergarten assistant and found there were 40 other applicants.

If the factory closed, all she could hope for would be casual work in the vineyards, tying vines or picking grapes, says Anita Harrison, 38. Or prostitution, says Mrs Whiting, dryly.

Protection cuts mean that many of these women will find themselves permanently out of the labour market, says Ms McCreadie.

The flaws in the freemarket approach and the Lego theory are acknowledged by the Government through the Labour Adjustment Program. Established in 1989 as part of the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Development Authority set up to oversee the original tariff cuts of the so-called Button Plan (the new cuts are a speeded up version of this plan), it offers retraining allowances and relocation grants. Married women are eligible.

But were country women really considered? The weekly allowance of $125 would be eaten up by petrol costs needed to travel to colleges in Bendigo and Ballarat, says Mrs Hamilton. And relocation for families established in the area is often not a choice.

Also, many women have been in and out of the industry due to family commitments - Mrs Harrison came back six months ago after a three-year break, for example - and would not qualify for the plan, which says workers must have been in the industry for two of the past three years.

The Prime Minister promised a study of the regional impact of protection cuts - a bit like shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted, says Ms McCreadie. A Victorian Department of Labour 1990 report has already predicted that under the less draconian cuts of the 1989 Button Plan - the effects on country towns such as Maryborough would be profound.

If jobs are lost, many married women will disappear from the labour market without so much as a statistical whimper. Many do not bother to register as unemployed, and those who do may not show up in ABS statistics, which record only unemployment benefit recipients and not the unemployed wives of working men. This is a fact not lost on economic policy makers, according to Ms McCreadie.

The clothing and textiles manager for Pacific Dunlop, Alan Goodfellow, concedes that the women at Maryborough are more efficient than their Chinese counterparts, but to compete that will have to "work smarter".

Will the factory close? Pacific Dunlop has closed shoe factories at Ferntree Gully and Colac and reduced its work force at Geelong since the Government announced its protection cuts plan. Mr Goodfellow will only say that the company intends to continue manufacturing in Australia "within the rules set by the Government". The future of factories such as Jockey depends on the exchange rate and levels of protection, he says.

Is it possible to work more quickly? I asked one of the women. You couldn't be pushed faster, she said, and trying to frighten people only makes things worse.

It seems that in the brave new world of market economics these women may be the losers either way - working to impossible demands to hold their jobs or with no jobs at all.

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A FAIR DAY'S WORK - WAGE FIXING AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

→ 'Enterprise agreements allow employers, employees and their unions to work together to develop and agree on innovative work and management arrangements suited to their specific circumstances - that is, there is a shift of responsibility away from distant third parties to the parties in the workplace.'
(Keating 1994, p.24)

→ 'We do accept, however, that enterprise bargaining - especially bargaining for over-award payments - places at a relative disadvantage those sections of the work force where women predominate.'
(Australian Industrial Relations Commission 1991, p. 56)

For most people, for the greatest part of their adult life, wages (either their own or a partner's) have been the primary source of their income. In fact most of our income distribution arrangements are founded on the view that this will be the case and that income from employment will ensure the financial well-being of the vast majority of people. It is also generally assumed that one's earnings will increase over the life cycle; that career progression means higher incomes. The increasing emphasis on superannuation for retirement income means that, in future, employment and earnings will be a significant determinant of a person's financial well being in retirement and is based on an assumption that people will be able to accumulate sufficient savings over their adult life to provide for their retirement.

These assumptions were never an accurate reflection of the experience of everyone in the community. Women, for example, have rarely had substantial enough continuous employment experience to access work-related benefits such as superannuation or long service leave. Even when they have had constant employment their earnings have been inadequate to provide for a satisfactory retirement income.

Now, as the labour market changes significantly, the ideas which have underpinned our income distribution arrangements are proving to be less relevant for more and more people. Questions have been raised as to whether in future there will be enough employment for everyone who needs it and whether the income obtained from employment will be sufficient to ensure an adequate standard of living. Changes in our wage fixing and industrial relations systems are one of the factors which have led to this questioning.

HISTORY OF WAGE FIXING

Australia has, since early this century, had a centralised industrial relations system which has provided protection for most workers of basic wages and conditions and which has been relatively progressive in setting minimum legal wages. Under this system most workers were covered by legally enforceable awards which set out the minimum wages and conditions of work for those in a particular craft, industry or occupation regardless of where they worked.

Awards were laid down by either state or federal industrial tribunals, the most important of which was the federal Conciliation and Arbitration Commission (now the Industrial Relations Commission). Employers and employees were represented before these tribunals by representative bodies (unions and employer organisations). These bodies would, on behalf of their members, negotiate wages and conditions, often within guidelines set down by the tribunals. When they were unable to reach agreement the tribunal would step in as 'umpire' to settle disputes.

In recognition of the importance of wages in providing for a decent standard of living early decisions by industrial tribunals based wage levels on the notion of need. However, in doing so they entrenched inequalities between men and women by setting higher rates for men on the basis of their presumed role as breadwinner and provider. The earliest minimum wage was set in 1907, in what is referred to as the Harvester Judgement, when Justice Higgins sought to set a rate which was sufficient to cover the 'normal needs of the average employee, regarded as a human being in a civilised community' (Commonwealth Arbitration Report 3). He included within this the need to support a wife and three children.

In 1919 a basic wage for female workers was set, the consideration again being that of need but with clear gender roles underpinning this assessment. The female basic wage was set at 54 per cent of the adult male basic wage. In 1950 the female basic wage was raised to 75 per cent of the male basic wage. Over the following years dissatisfaction with this disparity grew and in 1974 women were finally granted an equal minimum wage.

The system of centralised wage fixing, pioneered in Australia, remained intact until the late 1980s. It provided, in addition to legally enforceable award rates of pay, a means of seeking pay increases to take into account increases in the cost of living and a structure which allowed for the implementation of equal pay principles, although many would argue that the latter has never been fully implemented. It also provided a means by which improvements in wages and conditions could be spread across the whole work force. What tended to happen was that the stronger unions, or those in strategic areas of employment, gained pay increases which then 'flowed on' to other workers who were less able to take action.

Towards the end of the 1980s increasing emphasis was being placed on improving the productivity of the work force. This led to the Commission introducing, in 1988, a 'Structural Efficiency Principle' which required that wage increases had to be linked to efforts to improve structures which might limit productivity and efficiency in the particular industry or occupation for which an increase was sought.

This decision signalled the emergence of the now dominant factor in wage setting - a concern with the degree to which wages and wage setting structures may inhibit efficiency. To address this the focus has shifted away a centralised system within which general wage levels are set to one which is based more on the individual workplace, and in some states, such as Victoria, the individual worker.

This focus on separate agreements at workplaces is now referred to as enterprise bargaining. In broad terms, enterprise bargaining allows for employers and workers within one workplace or enterprise to agree on wages and conditions which will apply to workers in that workplace. Workplaces which enter into an enterprise agreement do not have to comply with the old awards except in relation to certain minimum 'safety net' requirements which are set down in legislation. An enterprise agreement may, for example, provide for penalty rates for weekend work to be abolished in exchange for an overall wage increase. In some places employers may

negotiate individual agreements with individual workers, in others they may only negotiate with groups of workers.

Legislation to encourage enterprise bargaining applies federally and in nearly every state, in various forms. The differences between the different laws relate primarily to the role of unions in the negotiating process, the emphasis given to collective as opposed to individual agreements, and the scope of safety net provisions, or minimum requirements which must be contained in any such agreement.

The shift to a more decentralised wages and industrial relations system has been described by the Business Council of Australia as aiming to provide 'greater freedom for individual enterprises to enter into agreements with their employees that reflect the interests of the enterprise' (Business Council of Australia 1989).

This shift has coincided with a greater emphasis being placed in the setting of wages on considerations such as competitiveness and the ability of the firm to pay and some reduction in the priority given to considerations of need. Some people suggest that this is a necessary development and that we need to 'remove welfare from wages'. Others argue that it could lead to the creation of a new category of 'working poor' as has happened in the United States where over 13 per cent of full-time workers have incomes below the poverty line (Castles and Mitchell 1994).

ISSUES

Equity

The move to enterprise bargaining is sometimes described as being part of a push to deregulate the labour market - to remove regulatory requirements which some people suggest impede the efficiency, productivity and competitiveness of firms. There has been quite a lot of discussion about whether deregulation will result in the productivity and efficiency improvements that its advocates claim. Some studies show that the regulatory environment has very little impact on efficiency or the strategic decisions of firms and that other factors are far more important. These include research and development, the internal dynamics within a firm and management practices (Alcorso & Hage 1994).

Others argue that regulation is essential to protect workers, particularly the less powerful, and to ensure that wages continue to provide an adequate income. Many people are now concerned that those most vulnerable in the work force, and less organised, will not gain, but in fact will be relatively worse off, through enterprise bargaining (Alcorso & Hage 1994). Particular concern has been expressed about enterprise bargaining arrangements which allow employers to negotiate agreements with individual workers.

These concerns have been evident in debate over the impact of enterprise bargaining on the wages and conditions of women workers with research showing that:

→ 'generally pay rises in female dominated areas are lower than in male dominated areas ... (and) in female dominated areas there is more emphasis on redesigning jobs than on career paths and training.' **(Hall & Fruin 1994)**

This study concludes that:

→ 'Much of the disadvantage women experience in enterprise bargaining arises from women's already disadvantaged position in the work force and inequality of power, exacerbated by the new bargaining structures which reduce collective support for weaker groups.' **(Hall & Fruin 1994)**

There is concern that enterprise bargaining will add to the already widening gap between high- and low-wage workers which is occurring as a result of changes in the structure of the Australian economy and in the labour market. On the other hand, this growing gap between the wages of the high- and low-paid is seen by some as a sign that the labour market is working better:

→ Economists have long sought ways of making the labour market work better; in particular, to encourage greater wage flexibility, so unemployed workers price themselves back into jobs. Since this implies a fall in pay at the lower end of the labour market, a good sign of an efficient job market (though, possibly, a socially divisive one) is a wide gap between the highest and lowest paid.' **(The Economist 1993)**

FLEXIBILITY

One of the stated aims of enterprise bargaining arrangements is to promote flexibility in working conditions to the benefit of both employers and employees. This flexibility was expected to assist women, and men, to better balance their paid work with their family responsibilities and to assist in making workplaces more family-friendly.

The desire for flexibility has been reflected most significantly in changes to working time arrangements. The majority of enterprise agreements contain provisions concerning working time with almost a quarter extending the spread of ordinary time hours in a day and nearly one fifth providing for the standard weekly hours to be averaged over the roster cycle leading to arrangements such as 12 hour shifts and annualised hours (Financial Review 1995). This extension of normal working hours and creation of flexible part-time arrangements has meant that in some industries overtime payments no longer exist.

These changes have been beneficial for some workers. For example, restrictions on part-time employment which existed in some awards may have, in the past, limited employment options for women. However, there are signs that the changes have not been universally beneficial. Increasingly full time jobs are being replaced by part-time and casual work and the 'inflexible' 9 to 5 is, for some, becoming the at call 24 hours a day, seven day week.

There is some disturbing evidence that enterprise agreements have resulted in less rather than greater control by women over their hours of work, thus restricting their capacity to juggle their paid and unpaid work; and that the introduction of changes, such as seven day rosters, in male areas of work may be reducing the capacity of men to participate in family life (Hall and Fruin 1994; Gibson 1993). An analysis of the impact of a seven day roster in mining communities in central Queensland found that the majority of both women and men considered that it had a negative effect on themselves, their families and the relationships within their families (Gibson 1993). Particular problems arose in families with children where women took on extra household work and fathers had less contact with their children than before because school, child-care and social engagements did not fit comfortably with the demands of the seven day roster.

Ironically some working time arrangements which might be regarded as flexibility at the option of the employee tend to be more common for males than females. Thirty four per cent of males are entitled to rostered days off as compared with 20 per cent of women, who are also less able to negotiate start and finish times when in full-time employment; 24 per cent of male full-time employees were able to make daily variations to their start and finish times as compared with 19 per cent of female full-time employees with the differential much the same for those with children under the age of twelve - 27 per cent of males and 23 per cent of females (ABS 1993).

FOR DISCUSSION

1. What sorts of considerations should be taken into account in setting wages and employment conditions?
2. Should a full-time job pay enough to support at least one person, and maybe more?
3. What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of enterprise bargaining?
4. How can we ensure that in future everyone has an adequate income?
5. What is the role of unions?

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WORK DAYS GET LONGER

Shane Green
The Age, December 15 1993

Jo Wigley thinks twice when she goes to put on the washing machine. By the time she gets to tackle household chores after a working day of 10 hours or more, it is invariably heading towards midnight and the noise of the machine could wake her children.

In her job as general manager of the training college at the Australian Institute of Management, Ms Wigley is a prime example of what employees across the nation are doing: working longer and harder.

The cultural change that has swept work places since the mid-1980's has been dramatic. Nowhere is that change more evident than in working hours, cutting across both the white and blue-collar work force.

This development is remarkable in a society that has championed the push for greater leisure. But it takes on a profound significance when put against an unemployment rate of 11 per cent.

Based on latest research by the National Institute of Labour Studies, the average length of the working week increased by three hours over the past decade to 43 hours. Total it up over the year, taking holidays into account, and we are working on average an extra three-and-a-half weeks.

A remarkable number of workers, like Jo Wigley, are stretching the boundaries of the working week even further. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1.3 million Australians are putting in 49 hours a week or more.

Not only has the working week grown, the standard shift and the notion of what constitutes ordinary hours of work are also being revolutionised.

Twelve-hour shifts are now common elements in the enterprise deals being negotiated in manufacturing. Workers are rolling their projected penalty rates and overtime into one higher base payment, but agreeing to work extra time when it's required.

Fewer jobs, but longer hours: the combination is described by some as the syndrome of overwork. This is the trend of the first half of this decade, bringing with it enormous economic and social change.

The United States has experienced a similar phenomenon, analysed by Juliet Schor in 'The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure'. Americans also on average work an extra month a year compared with 20 years ago, while the number of jobless has soared.

The trend is only now being recognised here. As we confront the crisis of one million people out of work, we are witnessing the advent of the Overworked Australian.

The recession has played a big part. The fear of unemployment has clearly been a factor in people working harder, often without extra pay.

And the slow haul out of recession has also had an impact. With the upturn, skilled workers in jobs are working longer to meet an increased demand for goods and services.

"That usually happens – firms work their existing staff longer before they will commit themselves to taking on more workers in a recovery," says Garth Nowland-Foreman, the director of the Australian Council of Social Service. "But that trend has continued for much

longer this time around. It's part of a deeper restructuring that's going on."

Jo Wigley's long working week in many ways typifies the cultural shift that has occurred in work places. She says she's often been described as a workaholic. "It's all part of your work, isn't it? The job and commitment and getting things done".

There is little choice she argues, for people in a management role. "There are so many issues facing organisations about staying relevant, and being profitable, surviving, coping with change, it's very difficult if you're in a senior or middle-manager role and don't have that commitment to put in the hours".

But at the same time, she says one of the biggest problems she faces is exhaustion, something she says is common among women trying to balance a full-time career and a full-time family. she tries to pick up her two children from school two or three times a week. A lunchtime can mean dashing home to put on the dishwasher. There is often paper work after the children go to bed.

Far away from the big end of town, in the melt room of the Smorgon Steel works in Laverton North where the temperature can hover near 40 degrees on a bad day, Peter Oseckas is part of the sea of change that has brought an end of the eight-hour day in the name of efficiency.

Mr Oseckas works 12-hour shifts, one of the lead items on the negotiating table when union bosses sit down to strike an enterprise deal in manufacturing.

Under this cycle, he works a roster of four 12-hour shifts, followed by the best part of four days off. He says he doesn't find the length of the shift a problem. "We keep ourselves busy most of the time. If you're only going to be sitting around behind a desk I can imagine that it would (be a problem). But it's a pretty physical type of work that we do, and the environment is noisy and loud, and the time seems to pass quite fast".

Mr Oseckas says he prefers the 12-hour shifts. He like the days off in the middle of block of shifts. But he admits that his work rosters, which run over weekends, is hard on family life. By the time he travels to and from his Geelong home, he is away from his wife and child for 14 hours.

A common thread in all of these massive changes to our working lives is that the agenda is being almost exclusively driven by the needs of the workplace, rather than the needs of the individual.

Professor Belinda Probert, the head of the department of social sciences at RMIT, is one of a few academics investigating the social implications of these developments.

Professor Belinda Probert notes the big focus on so-called "family-friendly" work places, with some companies providing things like child care. but, she says "it's all about making it easier for people to fit into the work place, not changing the work place so that it actually recognises that people have other lives which are important. It's about making it easier so you don't bring your problems to work."

In her research, Professor Probert is continually exploring what effects these changes have on women. "My worry is that most of the flexibility around hours is bad for women, whichever way you look at it".

She has examined the landmark enterprise agreement of the Sheraton Towers hotel on Southbank, which she praises as enlightened for that industry. One of the deal's features is that workers get paid a higher hourly rate, which incorporates penalty rates and overtime. In exchange, work out of "ordinary" hours is expected, with everyone sharing unsociable hours.

Those kind of hours, says Professor Probert, are incompatible for a person who is running a family. "Sometimes you're on nights, sometimes you're on evenings, sometimes you're on mornings ... this is not a place for women with children."

The advent of the Overworked Australian may also be having profound social and economic effects which have not been considered as the new work ethos has been developed in the drive for a more competitive Australia.

Longer hours for those with jobs, says ACOSS's Garth Nowland-Foreman, means that younger people and older people are being increasingly shut out of full-time jobs. He says the figures show that longer hours are being primarily worked by prime age males in full-time jobs.

"If a core of highly skilled workers is working those kind of hours, and other workers aren't being trained up to eventually replace them or are not being promoted into their jobs, then it can't be good for efficiency in the long run." Mr Nowland-Foreman says.

"Those people will burn themselves out, and it also means there's a lot less flexibility in each enterprise."

DIVIDED WE STAND? POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

→ 'I need another $100 a week. I don't mind doing two or three part-time jobs, if I'm going to be a good part of the community then I need a good wage. But I need to survive...and that's all I'm trying to do at this stage...I'm entitled to survive, I feel...To be on the level of a person who is entitled, or who has rights. I am not trying to...earn a lot of money...I don't have plans anymore of things I'd like to do in my life, I just want to live.'
(Jackson and Crooks 1993)

→ '...the indications are that by the turn of the century there will be insufficient work to meet the needs of those who wish to participate in the productive activity of the community, that much available work will not be able to generate an income sufficient to support a minimum standard of living and that there will be growing disparities in the work force in terms of the conditions and security of employment, and in terms of access to the wage and non-wage benefits generated through employment.' **(Burgess 1993).**

There is growing concern that the changes which are re-shaping work will result in an increasingly unequal Australia with more people living in poverty. Is this the case and if so what do we need to do to ensure that we have a society in which income, resources, and opportunities are fairly shared? This topic sheet outlines some of the reasons behind the concern about growing inequality as well as the available evidence on inequality and poverty in Australia.

INEQUALITY

A number of studies have found that inequality in Australia increased during the 1980s (Saunders 1992; Saunders 1993b; Harding 1993). Some of the main reasons for the growth in inequality have been:

- unemployment and under-employment;
- greater inequality in wages and incomes; and
- growing difference in the circumstances of families.

Increased variations in the earnings of married men have been especially important in the increasing inequality of family incomes as have differences in unearned incomes (e.g. from savings and investments). On the other hand, both government benefits and the earnings of married women have helped to moderate the growth in inequality (Saunders 1993a; Harding 1993).

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Employment is the main means through which most people in our society obtain an income. One consequence of a long period of close to full employment since World War II was that Australia had a relatively low level of inequality.

However, since the early 1970s Australia has experienced persistently high levels of unemployment and an increase in the length of time for which people are unemployed. This, in itself has contributed to increased inequality, but, in addition, unemployment has been more severe amongst some groups than others. It has been particularly severe for low-paid and low-skilled people, young people, Aboriginal Australians, those from a non-English speaking background, and amongst families in which there is already a family member who is not employed or not in the work force.

Female sole parents have very high rates of unemployment (Shaver 1993) as do young people (aged 15-24 years) with no employed parent (ABS 1994b). Teenagers and young adults have the highest rates of long term unemployment, although the duration of unemployment is longest for older men (35-54 years of age).

Nor has unemployment been evenly spread geographically. Many regions have experienced very high levels of unemployment and long-term unemployment. These include those parts of our capital cities (such as areas of western Sydney and the north-west of Melbourne) in which older manufacturing industries have been concentrated and some rural areas and provincial cities which have also been badly affected by structural change.

Unemployment is not the only factor which has contributed to growing inequality. The nature of employment and the rewards which people obtain from it have also changed. There has been a significant increase in the proportion of employment which is part-time and casual. Part-time employment rose from 10 per cent of all employment in 1966 to 24 per cent in 1994 (ABS 1994c) while casual employment rose from 16 per cent in 1982 to 22 per cent in 1993 (Department of Social Security 1993). While part-time employment suits some people, statistics indicate that more than a quarter (28 per cent) of those employed part-time wish to work more hours (ABS 1994c). Part-time and casual employment often entails lack of security and limited access to training, career paths, superannuation and other benefits.

INCOMES

We have also witnessed increased inequality in wages and incomes. The number of jobs which are low-paid has increased while the value of the income received from these jobs has fallen. At the same time the gap between high and low wages has grown (ABS 1994a).

→ 'The share of jobs which are low-paid has been increasing especially for men. Since 1976 over 70 per cent of all new jobs have been in the bottom 25 per cent of the male full-time weekly earnings distribution.... These changes have taken place alongside a fall in earnings, in real terms, of low-paid workers, possibly reflecting the greater competition for jobs. This trend has been apparent since 1985 and is most pronounced for low-paid men.'
(Committee on Employment Opportunities 1993, pp.38-39)

The growing gap between high and low wages has also occurred in other industrialised countries. A recent study suggests that there is less inequality of earnings in Australia than in countries such as the USA, the United Kingdom and Canada (Whiteford 1995). The same study indicates that the the gap between male and female wages is much less unequal in Australia than in most other industrially advanced countries. Some people have pointed to Australia's centralised wage bargaining and awards system as a possible reason for this. Now, however, there are concerns that enterprise bargaining may lead to greater inequality and that those most vulnerable in the work force will be relatively worse off. Evidence is already emerging that the gap between male and female wages is widening following the introduction of enterprise bargaining (Hall and Fruin 1994).

FAMILIES

The changes outlined above have contributed to growing divisions in the experience and circumstances of families:

- not all have benefited from the increasingly important contribution which women's earnings make to family well-being. Women whose spouses are unemployed or not in the labour market have been much less likely to increase their labour force participation than women who have an employed spouse. Their participation rate is one-third lower than that of women married to employed men. In addition, women whose spouses are unemployed are ten times more likely to be unemployed themselves than those married to employed men (Cass and Cappo 1994, p.11).

- unemployment is much longer on average for men whose spouses are not in the labour force (Cass and Cappo 1994).

- the number of sole parent families doubled between 1966 and 1986, most having been formed as a result of separation, divorce or the death of a spouse and the great majority female headed (McClelland 1994a). Fifteen per cent of all Australian families with children are now headed by sole parents and thirty per cent of all children will spend at least part of their childhood in a sole parent family. Sole parent breadwinners have higher levels of joblessness and unemployment than those in two-parent households with children and, even when in full-time work, earn only three-quarters of workers in the average two parent family (Australian Council of Social Service 1994, p.10).

- whilst the number of dual earner families has increased so too has the number in which no adult is employed. In September 1994, of those families in which children under 15 years of age were present, 354,200 had no adult employed while 929,800 had two parents employed (ABS 1994c).

The combination of greater inequality in family incomes with the growing divisions between those families with dual earner couples and those with no working parent, leads to significant variations in the experience of children, and also of young adults which are likely to affect their long-term prospects. In the long-term, this polarisation may also aggravate social division and reduce social cohesion.

POVERTY

Increasing inequality does not necessarily mean increased poverty. Inequality is translated into poverty when people's incomes are so low that they are unable to purchase, or have access to, those resources which affect their life chances and opportunities. These resources change over time and are related to the expectations and traditions of a particular society.

Studies show that poverty, as well as inequality increased in Australia over the 1980s (Saunders 1993b; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 1993). This followed a significant increase in family poverty over the 1970s (Gallagher 1985).

Some people believe that experiencing poverty is good for the individual. No doubt living in poverty for some time would soon make a person appreciate times of less hardship. But people who are forced to go without basic necessities for many years find the experience debilitating rather than strengthening:

> 'It's continual. It's week after week. You can't sort of say to yourself - in three months time I believe this will be better .... because you know damn well that in three months time you'll be sitting down with the pen and paper saying this is this week bills - what am I not going to pay? And hoping to God they don't cut the electricity off while you're paying the gas bill.' **(Jackson and Crooks 1993, p.12)**

The family types most likely to be living in poverty are sole parent families (between 16 and 21 per cent are poor), followed by single non-aged people (between 14 and 19 per cent), and then by couples with children. Families with larger numbers of children are more likely to experience poverty. Almost 50 per cent of those in poverty in Australia are in two-parent families with children (Harding 1994). Aboriginal Australians have the highest rate of poverty in Australia. Poverty is also high amongst families from some non-English speaking background communities (Taylor and MacDonald 1994).

Available poverty statistics make it difficult to assess the degree to which women are more likely than men to experience poverty. However, the high rate of poverty amongst sole parents, most of whom are female, and the continuing disadvantages which women face in relation to paid employment tend to suggest that women may be more vulnerable to poverty (McClelland and Macdonald 1995).

Particularly disturbing have been the signs that there may have been an increase in poverty amongst those employed full-time for the whole of a year (McClelland 1994b). This poses a warning about the capacity of the full-time employment of only one breadwinner to raise family incomes above poverty line levels in the future.

THE FUTURE?

The experience in other parts of the world presents a picture of the kind of society which may emerge as a result of the trends outlined above - a divided society in which a significant portion of the population is locked out of meaningful participation; in which the benefits of economic growth are confined to those who own capital and to those fortunate enough to find employment in a shrinking primary labour market while others are confined to an increasingly marginal and insecure secondary labour market.

We are confronted with the very real prospect that there will not be enough employment for all those who want and need it and that the income obtained from employment will, for many Australians, be insufficient to ensure an adequate standard of living. What can be done to ensure that Australia does not go down this path?

Many people believe that the most important thing is to ensure that there is enough employment for all those who want or need it. This could be achieved, it is sometimes argued, if governments were truly committed to full employment and pursued the appropriate policies.

Many also point to the need for redistribution of income through the tax and social security systems. The taxation system is a means whereby those who are better off contribute to improving the living standards of those not so well-off. Australia currently collects less through tax and other revenue measures than any of the industrially advanced countries. Many people argue that this will need to change if government is going to be able to provide the support needed to ensure that people do not live in poverty, especially if, in future, this requires that low wages are supplemented by government income support payments.

Some people suggest that government should introduce a guaranteed minimum or basic income. In this way government could ensure that everyone received the amount required to achieve a minimally adequate standard of living. Under this scheme the tax system would be used to 'take back' the payment as people's incomes increased.

FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the effects of poverty and inequality (on individuals, on families, on society)?

2. What do you think a fair society would look like?

3. What responsibilities do people have to one another in a society? What responsibilities do Government, businesses and unions have?

4. Do you think that inequality is necessarily a bad thing in a society? How much inequality is all right?

5. What would you like to see done to reduce poverty and inequality?

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LOOKING INTO GAP BETWEEN RICH, POOR

Tim Colebatch
The Age
May 1995

In the United State, one study tells us, 60 per cent of all income growth since 1979 has gone to the top 1 per cent of income earners. The US produces far more goods and services today than in 1973, yet the average American wage now buys less than when Richard Nixon was President.

The US is the extreme case of a global trend towards greater inequality in earnings. The resentment of the battlers at this has been an issue in the defeat of governments throughout the West, and the coalition is doing its damnedest to fan similar flames here.

Developing countries have raised their share of global manufacturing output to 25 per cent, and sent millions of migrants into Western countries, lowering wages for West's unskilled. A new ethic of selfishness has allowed those with market power – shareholders, executives, professionals – to take more of the cake at the battlers' expense.

While data on income distribution is more dated and patchy than any other economic data of comparable importance, a land-mark OECD report last week concluded that in most Western countries, inequality has increased in the 1980's.

Australia's official data on income distribution is particularly poor. Indonesia and New Zealand produce far more, and more time timely, data on how their national cake is sliced than Australia's Bureau of Statistics does.

Yet ensuring a fair distribution of income is surely no less crucial than producing it efficiently, and few economists would say markets by themselves produce a fair distribution.

But they disagree about how to measure income distribution, inequality and poverty. Do we just look at everyone's income? If benefits form government are included, shouldn't income tax be deducted too?

What about the "social wage" governments provide in the form of free education, health care, roads, housing and so on? What about indirect taxes, which make up most of the tax burden?

What about those costs that we all know determine how far an income goes: the number of dependents it has to feed and clothe, and the bite made into it by housing costs?

Australians have long prided themselves on being an egalitarian society. The international comparisons so far have suggested the complete opposite. The World Bank's World Development Report shows Australia as having (with Britain and Singapore) the most uneven income distribution in the Western World.

The top 20 per cent of Australians in 1985 earned 9.6 times as much as the poorest 20 per cent – compared with a ratio of 3.2 in Hungary and 4.3 in Japan.

But some data was based on different definitions, and all of it left out the redistributive impact of government taxes and welfare. Now at last we have a thorough and consistent study of income distribution in different countries: the Luxembourg Income Study, which forms the core of last week's OECD report, Income Distribution in OECD Countries.

The Luxembourg study included all income from private sources, plus government cash benefits, minus direct taxes such as income tax. Once this brief summary of the Government's role was included, income distribution in Australia and the West looks much fairer – although one must note, the data came from the mid-'80s.

In Australia, the income ratio between rich and poor was more than halved to 4:1. That was much better than the US (almost 6:1) but still worse than most other.

In Finland, the top 20 per cent ended up with only 2.6 times more money to spend than the bottom 20 per cent. Sweden was just behind, as were Belgium, Norway, Germany and Luxembourg. Australia ranked 12th of the 16 countries. The US was by far the worst.

Using a Gini index to measure income distribution throughout the range, Australia looked slightly better, but still less fair than most. On the OECD figures, the bottom 20 per cent (or quintile) of Australians, got 7.7 per cent of all disposable income in 1985, the lowest outside the US, Britain and Ireland. The bottom 10 per cent (or decile) got only 2.9 per cent.

The second quintile of Australians got 13.3 per cent, the middle group got 18 per cent – roughly the same as other countries – the fourth quintile 24 per cent, and the top group 37 per cent. In Finland, by contrast, the bottom group got 11 per cent of the cake and the top group 31 per cent.

But is that a fair statement of how Australia compares? No, says the Minister for Social Security, Mr Baldwin. No, says Dr Peter Whiteford, the Sydney poverty researcher who worked on the Luxembourg study and is now a consultant to Mr Baldwin. No, says Professor Ann Harding, director of the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling.

Mr Baldwin and Dr Whiteford note that the study excludes:

- The social wage, which – especially in health – is more heavily targeted to favour the poor in Australia.
- Home ownership, which is more widespread in lower income ranges in Australia than in any other Western country.
- Indirect taxes, which are often regressive and play a larger part in the tax system in Europe.
- Increased welfare benefits since 1985-86, including the family allowance supplement.

Dr Whiteford describes the study he co-authored as "the best available, but there are enormous problems with it". If they could have included housing costs, the social wage and indirect taxes, he says, Australia would have come out fairly similar to all countries except the US. At least in 1985 – and alas, that tells us nothing about Labor's term in office.

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topic sheet

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BUT WHAT CAN WE DO? HOW COMMUNITIES ARE RESPONDING.

It is easy to feel that the changes affecting work in our society are so big that the future is out of our control; that there is little we can do which will have any effect or impact. Increasingly, however, individuals, groups and whole communities are searching for - and finding - ways in which they can play a part in shaping the kind of future which they want to see. For some this involves lobbying government to take action; for others it involves specific initiatives in their own community. That community might be those living in a specific geographic area or locality; or it might be a community which is defined by the common characteristics or interests of its members e.g. women, Aboriginal people. This topic sheet will give you an idea of some of the ways in which communities are tackling the challenge of the future. It includes specific examples which might give you some ideas about things which you could do to help to make a difference in your community.

TACKLING UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment can mean loneliness, alienation and poverty for individuals and families. It can also impact on the whole community. For example, local businesses can suffer if people do not have money to spend. In country areas young people may be forced to move to the city to seek employment. Many groups and organisations are working to overcome unemployment in their communities. Here are some of the things they are doing.

Improving the odds for unemployed people.

Employment and training programs aim to help unemployed people to obtain employment. Programs can help people to develop new skills; to build on or update their existing skills; and to gain work experience. Statistics show that unemployed people who have participated in employment and training programs have a better chance of getting a job than those who have not participated in a program.

Those involved in providing employment and training programs include welfare and church organisations; community houses and neighbourhood learning centres; TAFE colleges; and local community groups. As well as providing training courses, these groups organise short-term work experience placements and/or longer term employment for unemployed people. This involves encouraging and convincing local businesses to take on people who are unemployed. The Commonwealth Department of Employment Education and Training provides funding for a range of employment and training programs and also offers subsidies for employers who provide placements for unemployed people.

Efforts to improve the chances of individual unemployed people need not focus only on specific job skills. Helping someone to improve their English language skills can be important. Something as simple as providing clothes which can be worn to job interviews can also make a difference.

Creating jobs

Training and work experience programs can improve the employment prospects of individuals. At the same time, if unemployment is to be overcome, we need to ensure that there are enough jobs for everyone who wants employment. Whilst much of the responsibility for ensuring that there are enough jobs rests with government, many groups have begun to look at the contribution which they can make in creating new job opportunities in their communities.

For some this has involved setting up not-for-profit businesses which provide jobs that otherwise would not have existed. These businesses, like any other, sell their goods and services in the marketplace. They aim to make enough money to be financially self-supporting and any 'profits' are re-invested in the business or used to create further employment. A number of these businesses are based on establishing a market for activities which would not otherwise have been undertaken or which have, in the past, been undertaken as unpaid work. Examples of this include businesses set up to undertake recycling or other environmental activities as well as others which provide house-cleaning and gardening services.

Other groups and organisations have focused on ways in which they can encourage and support people interested in setting themselves up in self-employment or in running their own small business. This might include providing advice, assistance or training in areas such as business planning, finances, management and marketing. They often draw on the skills, experience and knowledge of people in their communities to help others who are starting out. In some communities small revolving loan funds have been established to make it easier for new small businesses to obtain start up funds.

Strengthening local economies

Some regions have been particularly hard hit by unemployment and by the changes taking place in our economy. Jobs have disappeared as industries which previously provided employment have wound back or closed down. In a number of regions people from business, unions, governments and the community have come together to identify ways in which they can help to rebuild or strengthen the local economy and to generate employment. Often the initiative for setting up a regional economic or employment development organisation comes from local government, but in some cases community groups have taken the initiative and persuaded local government and others to become involved.

These regional economic development bodies aim to identify a co-ordinated set of strategies which are sometimes pulled together in the form of a regional economic and employment development plan. Specific strategies might include building on areas in which the region is seen to have particular strengths or competitive advantages; encouraging and supporting the development of new local businesses; ensuring that training is linked to the needs of the local economy and local employers; and ensuring that the region has the physical and social facilities needed for a vibrant economy and community.

CREATING OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION

In our society a lot of importance has been placed on paid employment. This is partly because it has been the main means through which people obtain an independent income. It is also because employment has been viewed as one of the main ways in which people contribute to and participate in their community. Employment has, in addition, been viewed as providing people with a sense of self-worth, identity, meaning, value and social status. For many people employment has been the basis of their interaction with others in their community. Given all of this it is not surprising that those without paid work - such as those who are unemployed, retired or looking after family members - may feel undervalued and excluded.

Many people are now questioning whether we have placed too much emphasis on paid employment. They suggest that we have under-valued other means through which people may contribute to society and achieve identity and meaning in their lives, including, most particularly, the caring work for which women have had primary responsibility. Our over-

emphasis on employment, they suggest, has also meant that we have not adequately developed other means through which people, whether or not they are employed, can participate in the life of the community.

It has been suggested that high levels of unemployment and the increase in part-time employment mean that many people will not have their need for income, for meaningful activity or for social interaction met solely through employment. It is, therefore, essential that we develop a broader range of options and opportunities. These are some of the ways in which people are seeking to expand the options available in their communities.

Trading without money

Some communities have established Local Exchange Trading Systems (LETS). LETS schemes are designed to allow people within a community to exchange goods and services without using money. Instead of money, people are paid in points which can only be used to purchase goods and services from others participating in the scheme. A central register keeps track of how many points each person has or how many they owe the scheme. An example of how LETS schemes work is included in the examples on following pages. LETS schemes can allow people, whether or not they are employed, to use their skills and abilities to obtain access to things they need. They can also play a role in stimulating greater involvement and interaction amongst members of a community. However, people still need to have something to 'sell' which others are prepared to 'buy' and if the things which they need cannot be obtained within the LETS scheme they will need money to purchase them.

Different avenues for work and learning

Employment is one of the few means we have for obtaining income, but is not the only way we can engage in interesting and fulfilling activities. A range of groups and organisations have established new and different ways for people in their communities to learn and to put their skill to use in ways which they find rewarding. Many neighbourhood houses and adult learning centres, for example, run courses which allow people to expand their knowledge, learn new skills and build on existing skills while interacting with others. They help people to develop interests which they can pursue whether or not they have employment. The University of the Third Age was set up specifically to encourage and enable older people to continue the learning process throughout their lives. Reading groups and study circles are another way in which people can continue learning regardless of their age or employment status.

FOR DISCUSSION

1. What services or facilities are available for people in your community who are unemployed?

2. What options are available for people to participate in or contribute to your community outside employment?

3. What else could be done to make a difference in your community?

4.. What organisations or groups in your community could help to make a difference?

5. What could you do to help to make a difference in your community?

THIS WAY UP

This Way Up is a program operated by the Salvation Army to provide training and work experience for homeless young people. The program operates through four not-for-profit businesses. This Way Up Furniture Company produces a range of inexpensive, attractive pine furniture including lounge suites, tables, beds, desks and wardrobes. This Way Up Transport provides a cartage service for the furniture company and for other Salvation Army projects. Cargo Clearance operates as a retail outlet for the furniture and other merchandise. In addition, a small cleaning service contracts to accommodation programs, offices and institutions.

These initiatives have been structured to help disadvantaged young people acquire the skills necessary to gain employment. Although This Way Up operates primarily as a training program, its business projects provide a real world context for training, employment and the personal development of the people involved. This Way Up has grown to the point where it now has an annual turnover of $1.5 million and provides training and employment for 200 young people each year.

REVOLVE

Revolve is a company established to create jobs through the conservation of resources. It salvages, sorts and resells useable goods from several tips in Canberra. Work which was previously not done and apparently had little market value has been converted to paid work and is increasingly highly valued. Revolve began in 1988 with three employees. It now provides 29 jobs, recycles 3,000 tonnes per year and has turnover in excess of $1 million per year.

Revolve has developed a creative approach to work force organisation, partly in response to the needs of many of its employees who have been unemployed for long periods or who have problems which make it difficult for them to hold a job. Flexible employee-centred arrangements offer workers options of permanent part-time employment, generous leave without pay provisions, flexibility in jobs and in movement between full-time and part-time positions.

Revolve's founders were concerned to find long-term solutions to unemployment through building a sustainable business structure in an environmentally sound industry that would create jobs. The business is one hundred per cent financially self-sufficient and, since it is a not-for profit body, surpluses are reinvested back into the company.

GREENHOUSE CLEANING

Greenhouse Cleaning was established in 1993 to create work through training people in environmentally friendly cleaning techniques. Twenty people are employed providing cleaning services to over one hundred regular clients. Greenhouse Cleaning trains people in professional cleaning techniques then supports the trainees as they move into the work force by employing them after training. Employees are paid award wages and superannuation, and are covered by Workcover.

One of Greenhouse Cleaning's main aims is to raise the profile of domestic cleaning from a low-paid, undervalued status to an acknowledged and valued profession. It is finding that its services are in high demand because the enterprise pays attention to customer service by providing trained staff who have knowledge about environmental issues in the household. Greenhouse Cleaning is administered through Outreach Community Centre, Williamstown.

THE LABOUR CO-OP

The Labour Co-operative in Newcastle New South Wales was established as a not-for-profit organisation in 1986 with the aim of providing and maintaining employment in the Hunter region. It now oversees employment for more than 600 people at any one time and is the largest employment organisation in the region.

The Co-op provides a personalised service for both employers seeking workers and people seeking work. It maintains a computerised register of people available for employment and when a placement is made it handles payroll, workers compensation, insurance, taxes and superannuation requirements. These services lessen the workload for employers, especially where temporary employment is involved, while offering protection for employees who would otherwise individually subcontract themselves to employers, often without full knowledge of their legal and industrial entitlements.

The Co-op prides itself on the high ethical standards it applies both to its own organisational practices and to the way it works with industry and those placed in employment. Award wages and conditions are strictly applied as are regulatory requirements regarding matters such as insurance cover. Training is an integral element of the services provided. The Co-op has developed specific training programs which have proven beneficial in placing people in work. Its aim is always to advance people towards permanent employment and employers are not charged for permanent placements.

COMMUNITY PLANNING - CITY OF BALLARAT

Unemployment has been a big issue in Ballarat, the city having had persistently high levels of unemployment (around 16 per cent of the work-force) for some time. The Ballarat community plan, *Creating our future*, was released in late 1994. It was developed as a result of an extensive consultative planning process and more than 1,000 people played a direct role in the project. The Plan notes that job creation is central to planning in the locality:

> in promoting tourism and industrial development; in looking to create new 'green' industries; in value-adding to primary commodities; in developing art, craft and cultural activities; and, in providing supportive infrastructure for new small businesses as an opportunity for people to create their own jobs (p.11).

The plan identifies priority goals for the local economy and specific strategies for achieving those goals.

'LETS' SCHEMES

Jenny, a sole parent is not currently employed, but she has a lot of experience in writing funding submissions. A local community group arranges for Jenny to prepare a submission for them in exchange for which the group will 'pay' her one hundred LETS points. The central register credits Jenny with these points and deducts them from the 'account' of the community group. Later, Jenny organises for Hahn, an unemployed plumber, to fix her leaking tap in exchange for eighty LETS points. Again this transaction is recorded on the central register.

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For further examples of how communities are acting to shape the future see O'Neill, K 1995, *Signposts for future employment*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne.

5

THE BASIS OF THE BARGAIN - SOME KEY ISSUES FOR WOMEN

→ [Women]...receive less remuneration for their labour, own less property, have less access to finance and financial security, have less choice in their work, have less access to promotion and career paths, are less likely to become political or union leaders, and are less likely to be 'honored' by the government.
(Victorian Women's Trust 1991)

The future of work raises many important issues for women. Will the way in which we approach work in the future reflect women's experiences as well as men's? Will it result in a more equitable distribution of income, resources and time or will it worsen existing inequalities? What will it mean for women's economic independence and security?

THE WAY WE WERE

Historically, women have had a different relationship to work than men and they have, as a consequence, had less access to income and resources in their own right. Key factors in this have been the gender division of labour and the higher value which has been placed on paid work than on unpaid work. The term 'gender division of labour' refers to the fact women and men have generally undertaken different types of work in the family, in the paid work force and in the community.

Women have had primary responsibility for much of the unpaid work in our society including, especially, the caring work which has been undertaken in families and in the community. For a long time this unpaid work was viewed as the key to the role and identity of women. Women's participation in the paid work force has been limited both by deliberate exclusion (as in the case of laws and regulations which in the past required women to leave their jobs when they married) and as a consequence of their responsibility for unpaid work which has often limited their capacity to undertake paid work. In contrast, having a paid job has been an important part of what it means to be a man in Australia.

For much of our history this gender division of labour was reflected in a particular family model in which a male breadwinner was responsible for providing the income needed for survival and a female housewife was responsible for the other needs of the family. Men could expect to start paid work by the time they were fifteen or sixteen (later for the minority who undertook higher education) and to remain in employment until at least the age of sixty-five. Many could expect to work in one occupation or industry for most of their lives. Women could also expect to enter the work force at a fairly early age, but were far more likely to leave employment either upon marriage or when they had children.

Paid work has generally had higher status in our society than unpaid work. Indeed, it is only recently that much of the unpaid work which is done by women has been recognised as being work. Paid employment in our society has been viewed as important partly because it is generally the means by which people obtain income, but also because, for cultural and historical reasons, it has been seen as providing people with a sense of self-worth, identity and meaning as well as social status and legitimacy. It has been said that paid work is an important part of the model we have been given of what it means to be a citizen and to participate fully in society.

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE?

Many things have changed over recent decades while others have changed very little.

Employment

Women's participation in paid employment has increased dramatically and this is especially the case for married women. In 1947 the participation rate for women was less than 10 per cent. Immediately after World War II it was under 30 per cent. In the 1990s it is over 50 per cent and is expected to increase to 60.3 per cent by the year 2005 (ABS 1993). As a result the economic circumstances of women are now increasingly dependent on their own labour market activity rather than, for example, on their husband's. However, women's position in the work force is still significantly different than men's:

- women's work force participation is still substantially lower than that of men (89.46 per cent) and this is particularly true for those who are married with children.

- the increase in women's work force participation has been overwhelmingly in part-time employment, much of which entails lack of security and limited access to training, career paths, superannuation and other benefits. As a proportion of the female population there are now fewer women employed full-time than there were twenty years ago. Forty-two per cent of all women who are in paid work are employed part-time compared with 11 per cent of men (ABS 1994) and the proportion of female part-time employees who would prefer to work more hours has doubled from 13 per cent in 1978 to around 24 per cent in 1994 (ABS 1994).

- women are still concentrated in a relatively narrow range of occupations and industries. Seventy-seven per cent of women workers are concentrated in just four industry groups and 54 per cent are concentrated in just two occupational categories.

- despite some progress toward equal pay women still earn on average only 67 per cent of average male earnings. Women are over-represented at the bottom end of the income range. This is only partly explained by the fact that women are more likely to be employed part-time. Annual income for men is consistently higher than for women regardless of the number of weeks or hours worked.

In addition, increased work force participation has not been equally spread across all groups of women. For example, women who are married to unemployed men have a participation rate one third lower than those married to employed men (Cass and Cappo 1994, p.11).

Nor have the benefits of work force participation been equally spread. Aboriginal women, women from non-English speaking backgrounds and young women have higher rates of unemployment than do women generally and women whose spouses are unemployed are ten times more likely to be unemployed than those whose spouses are employed (Cass and Cappo 1994, p.11). Sole parents also have very high rates of unemployment.

Factors which have contributed to the increase in the number of women seeking employment include changes in women's aspirations, increased availability of child-care, progress toward equal pay, a decline in the age of completion of child rearing, longer duration of schooling for children, improvement in the health of women and children and removal of formal barriers to employment (Young 1990; Shaver 1993a). Other factors which may have contributed include increased availability of part-time work and the financial pressures associated with slow growth in wages, a decline in housing affordability and a lengthening of the period of time for which children are financially dependent upon their parents.

One of the most significant factors has been changes in the structure of the Australian economy which have had the effect of increasing employment in areas in which women have traditionally been concentrated and reducing employment in areas of male employment. In contrast to most of the post-War period, over the past five years the official unemployment rate for women has been lower than that for men. The official figure, however, does not take into account hidden unemployment.

Further, while many areas of employment growth have favoured women (for example part-time work), there are still many groups of women who are especially vulnerable, such as those with lower levels of education and low or unrecognised labour market skills, those with young children and older married women with low paid employment expectations. Sole parent breadwinners have higher levels of joblessness and unemployment than those in two-parent households with children. Even when in full-time work, sole parents' earnings are only three-quarters of workers in the average two parent family (Australian Council of Social Service 1994, p.10).

Families

Families have become more diverse both in composition and in terms of work patterns. The 'typical' family comprising husband in full-time employment, wife outside the labour force and caring for dependent children is no longer dominant:

- only 21 per cent of all Australian families are composed of a couple where the woman is not in paid work, and for families with dependent children, the figure is only 30 per cent (Cass and Cappo 1994, p.8).

- between 1983 and 1993 the proportion of married couple families with both partners in the work force increased from 41 per cent to 51 per cent. The proportion with only one partner in the work force fell from 41 per cent to 29 per cent. Of married couples with dependent children 58 per cent had both partners in the work force in 1993 (Department of Social Security 1993, p.10).

- the number of sole parent families doubled between 1966 and 1986, most having formed as a result of separation, divorce or the death of a spouse and the great majority female headed (McClelland 1994).

- the pattern of the man employed full-time continuously for forty or more years and the woman withdrawing from employment after the arrival of children is likely to become less prevalent in future. Both men and women are less likely to work full-time continuously and more likely to experience changes of employment, to withdraw from the labour force for a period (either voluntarily or involuntarily), and to work varied hours.

Unpaid work

Women's increased participation in paid work has not been matched by an equal reduction in the amount of unpaid work which they do nor in the amount of unpaid work done by men. Women still undertake about 70 per cent of all unpaid work. This is despite evidence of some changes in attitudes to male and female roles and to the sharing of unpaid work.

Whilst there has been some reduction in the difference between the amount of time which women and men spend on unpaid work, this has come about because of a decrease in the amount of time spent by women rather than through an increase in the time spent by men. The main areas in which women have reduced the time they spend on unpaid work are cooking, laundry and ironing. The time which they spend caring for children has actually increased (Bittman 1995).

Large numbers of women now perform a 'double shift' - paid work followed by a second shift of unpaid work. Many are struggling to juggle the competing demands of their paid and unpaid workloads. This has led to some questioning by women of 'the basis of the bargain' which they have had to strike in return for their increased involvement in the work force and their increased economic independence.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The picture which emerges from the trends outlined above is one in which opportunities for women, especially in relation to paid employment, have increased, although not all women have shared equally in those opportunities. At the same time women are still far from having achieved equality in the work force and even further from achieving equality in relation to unpaid work. In many ways changes in women's relationship to work have resulted in new pressures and tensions in women's lives. What, then, needs to happen in future if we are to achieve a fairer distribution of work, income, resources and time? What sorts of changes would improve women's lives? Some of the suggestions which have been put forward are outlined below.

Back to the future?

Some people suggest that everyone, including women, would be better off if we returned to the pattern of the past in which women were less likely to participate in paid employment. Women, they argue, have been forced into the work force because of increased financial pressures on families. The solution is to reduce those pressures, perhaps through higher government payments to those caring for children or by providing some allowance to women in the home. This would free women from the pressures of combining paid and unpaid work as well as freeing up paid jobs for unemployed men and young people.

Others argue that this is impractical. The jobs which women do are not necessarily those for which young people are skilled or suited. Nor are they jobs for which men have been trained or which men want to do. In any case, women have an equal right to undertake paid work and the kind of society we should be aiming for is one in which everyone has the opportunity to participate in the full range of activities which comprise a full and satisfying life. Economic necessity is only one of the reasons why women seek paid work, they suggest. Why, some ask, should the community, through payments for women to stay at home, pay for some men to have an unpaid housekeeper? Rather, it is suggested we should do something about the unequal way in which unpaid work is shared.

Accounting for women?

Various proposals have been put forward as to what should be done about the unpaid workload which women carry. Unpaid work in our society has generally been greatly undervalued. This has led to calls for the economic and social value of such work to be recognised by incorporating it into the national accounts system which is used to assess Australia's economic performance. Some, however, question whether notional calculation of the value of unpaid work would do anything to address the unequal access to income and resources with which it is associated. It would be preferable they suggest to ensure that appropriate services or support are provided to those, predominantly women, undertaking such work.

Many people suggest that men and boys need to be educated and persuaded to undertake more of the unpaid work in the home. Others argue that this strategy has not worked to date and that, since many men are working longer hours in their paid employment, it is unlikely to do so in future.

Some have called for women to be paid for the unpaid work which they do through some form of government allowance. Others suggest that this is either unrealistic or undesirable. Unrealistic because governments could not afford to pay an allowance which would provide anything like an adequate income. Undesirable because it would have the effect of trapping women in their domestic role, thus limiting their options.

One thing on which there is widespread agreement is the need for workplaces to become more family-friendly; to change in ways which make it easier for both men and women to better balance their paid work and their family responsibilities. There is less agreement about the proposal that more unpaid work should be converted into paid employment. This would

involve, for example, the expansion of publicly funded community services such as child care, services for older people and services for people with disabilities. It would also involve the expansion of commercial services which take on work which would otherwise be done on an unpaid basis. To some extent this is already happening. The growth of home cleaning and maintenance services and the increased consumption of prepared or take away foods are some examples.

Equal employment?

Many suggestions have been made about changes which are needed to improve women's position in relation to paid employment. Firstly, it is proposed, we need to expand educational and career opportunities for women and girls so that they are not restricted to the lower paid areas in which they are over-represented. Equal opportunity and affirmative action laws and policies can play an important role in ensuring that women are not denied those opportunities.

Some suggest that we also need to re-assess the value which has been placed on different jobs. Women's work, they argue has been undervalued. Whilst the skills involved in men's work have been recognised, the often different skills involved in women's work have not. This has meant that work which has mainly been undertaken by women has not been as well rewarded as that undertaken by men. Changing this would involve a different approach to equal pay which would use less biased tools for comparing the value or worth of different kinds of work. Women involved in education and training have pointed to the importance of ensuring that the skills involved in women's work are adequately accounted for in the new competency based training system which may play an increasingly important role in determining both what people are paid and the opportunities available to them.

Many people suggest that the workplace needs to change to reflect the fact that there are now more than seven women in the work force for every ten men. The workplace, it is suggested, has reflected the experience of men and the assumption that many would have a wife at home full-time to look after children, do the shopping and so on. Arrangements in the workplace should ensure that both women and men are able to fulfil their responsibilities outside the workplace. Family and parental leave are important in achieving this as is genuine flexibility in working time arrangements. Flexibility is one of the stated aims of the new enterprise bargaining system for determining wages and working conditions. However, initial research on enterprise bargains which have been negotiated suggests that they may have made things more difficult for women by requiring people to work longer shifts or to work outside 'normal' working hours. There is some disturbing evidence that enterprise agreements have resulted in less rather than greater control by women over their hours of work, thus restricting their capacity to juggle their paid and unpaid work; and that the introduction of changes, such as seven day rosters, in male areas of work may be reducing the capacity of men to participate in family life (Hall and Frum 1994; Gibson 1993).

Concerns have also been raised more generally about enterprise bargaining. Many are concerned that those most vulnerable in the work force, and less organised, will not gain, but in fact will be relatively worse off. Enterprise bargaining, it has been suggested, will lead to an increase in the wages gap between men and women. Some initial research has shown that in general under enterprise bargaining pay rises in female dominated areas have been lower than those in male dominated areas (Hall & Frum 1994). Potential problems for women which have been raised in discussion about enterprise bargaining include the following:

- enterprise bargains often seek to link pay increases to increases in productivity but productivity is often difficult to accurately assess or measure in many of the jobs which women do.
- it can be difficult for women to involve themselves in enterprise bargaining processes because of family responsibilities and because they may work in part-time or casual jobs. In addition, many women have not had opportunities to develop the necessary skills, experience and confidence to be fully involved.
- the needs of women workers may not be reflected in enterprise agreements which are negotiated at workplaces where most workers are male.

Women, it has been suggested will be even worse off where new legislation allows employers to negotiate employment contracts with individual workers.

FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the positive and negative aspects for women of the changes which are re-shaping work? What opportunities do they provide for ensuring a fairer future? What threats do they pose for women's economic security and independence?

2. How might work (paid and unpaid) be shared more fairly? What changes would need to take place for this to happen?

3. What needs to be done to improve women's position in the paid work force?

4. What should be done about unpaid work?

5. What partnerships between families, employers, unions and governments are necessary to enable men and women to share income earning and family caring according to their wishes at different stages of their lives?

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DOUBLE OR TRIPLE TIME?

Jenny McGennisken *Network*

Newsletter of the Rural Women's Network, Number 2, 1994

The alarm goes off, another day dawns. It's 6.30am, mustn't lie in bed a minute longer - so much to do - make lunches, get breakfasts, wake up kids, make beds, hang out washing, sweep the floors, do those dishes, have a shower, fling on make-up and clothes look at my watch.

It's 7.45 - I must go or I'll be late for work. As I kiss the kids goodbye and head for the door, I hear my husband call, "While you're in town can you go the Stock Agent's and pick up these few items?" Sure I think, there goes my lunch hour again.

Rush at work - great its 5.00pm.

Again the rush is on. Pick up the kids from the baby sitter, stop at the service station for fuel. Voices from the back seat. "I want a drink and a packet of chips". Knowing it's a full half hour trip home, I give in to the kids' demands. At least I'll have half an hour of peace and quiet driving home.

Arrive home and the rush is on. Clean the coffee mugs left on the floor, on the table or wherever my husband left them as he rushed out the door. Horray I think, he remembered to put the milk back in the fridge. Get tea organised and let my kids help me peel the vegies although I know I could do it much more quickly. Tonight we'll eat at the table instead of a plate on our knees whilst watching T.V. The conversation around the tea table covers topics from my 5 year old's day at school, to my 3 year old's adventures with Dad in the ute, doing "sheep work".

Then it's bath time, do the dishes. "I just need a lift with a few things," calls my husband. So off I go to lift the generator off the ute, find I've got the wrong drench, and hear that it's time the lawns were mown. I rush back inside to hear the cry of "We want a story." I go to the bedroom to find a pile of books waiting to be read. "Only time for one story tonight," I say to the kids. I finally leave the room after reading all about Jillian Jiggs and her Pigs at least three times.

Then it's time to dry the dishes, and make a pot of tea. As I sit down to relax, the phone rings. Of course it's one of those nights - the phone never stops ringing. By 10.00pm I'm exhausted, but then I realise I haven't ironed a uniform for school the next day, there's an excursion form to be signed and money needed and my legs need shaving! Next time I see it's 11pm.

Go to bed, collapse into a deep sleep. It's 6.30am, another day dawns. Stuff it I say and pull the covers over my head. Being a wife, mother, partner in the farm and working for 4 days a week for the Office of Fair Trading doesn't give me much personal time, but I wouldn't swap it for anything.

By working away from the farm, I earn a living for my family to survive on. Sure times are tough, but we as a family unit and myself as a person have become stronger. We are more adaptable, help each other out as much as we can, but most off all feel proud that we so far have been able to succeed above every trial put before us so far. Rural life is changing, and I am a living part of it.

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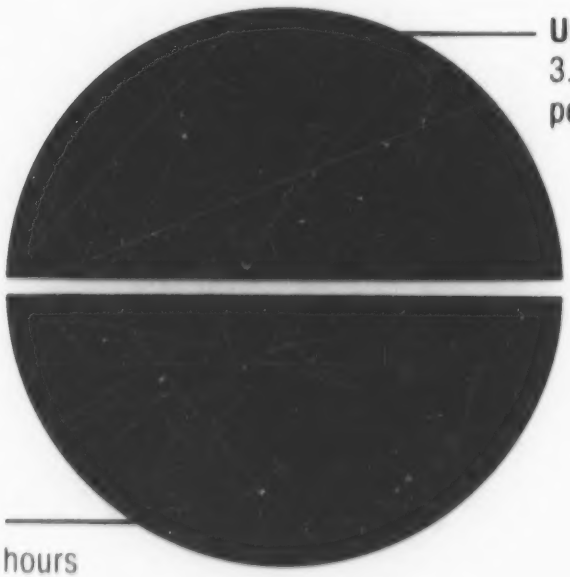
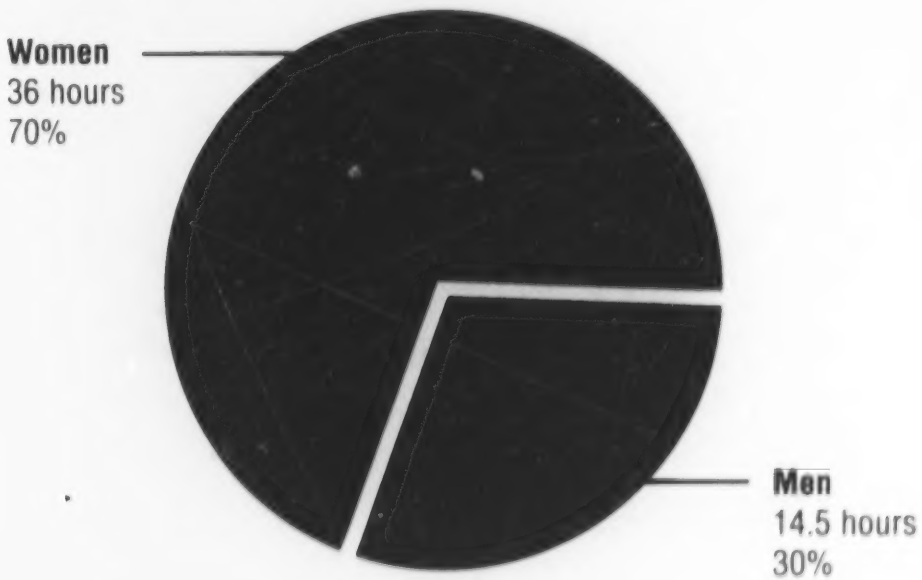
1 TOTAL UNPAID AND PAID EMPLOYMENT



Source: Office of the Status of Women, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet 1991. *Selected findings from Juggling Time*. Canberra.

2

WOMEN DO ABOUT 70 PER CENT OF UNPAID WORK



Source: Office of the Status of Women, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet 1991, *Selected findings from Juggling Time*, Canberra.

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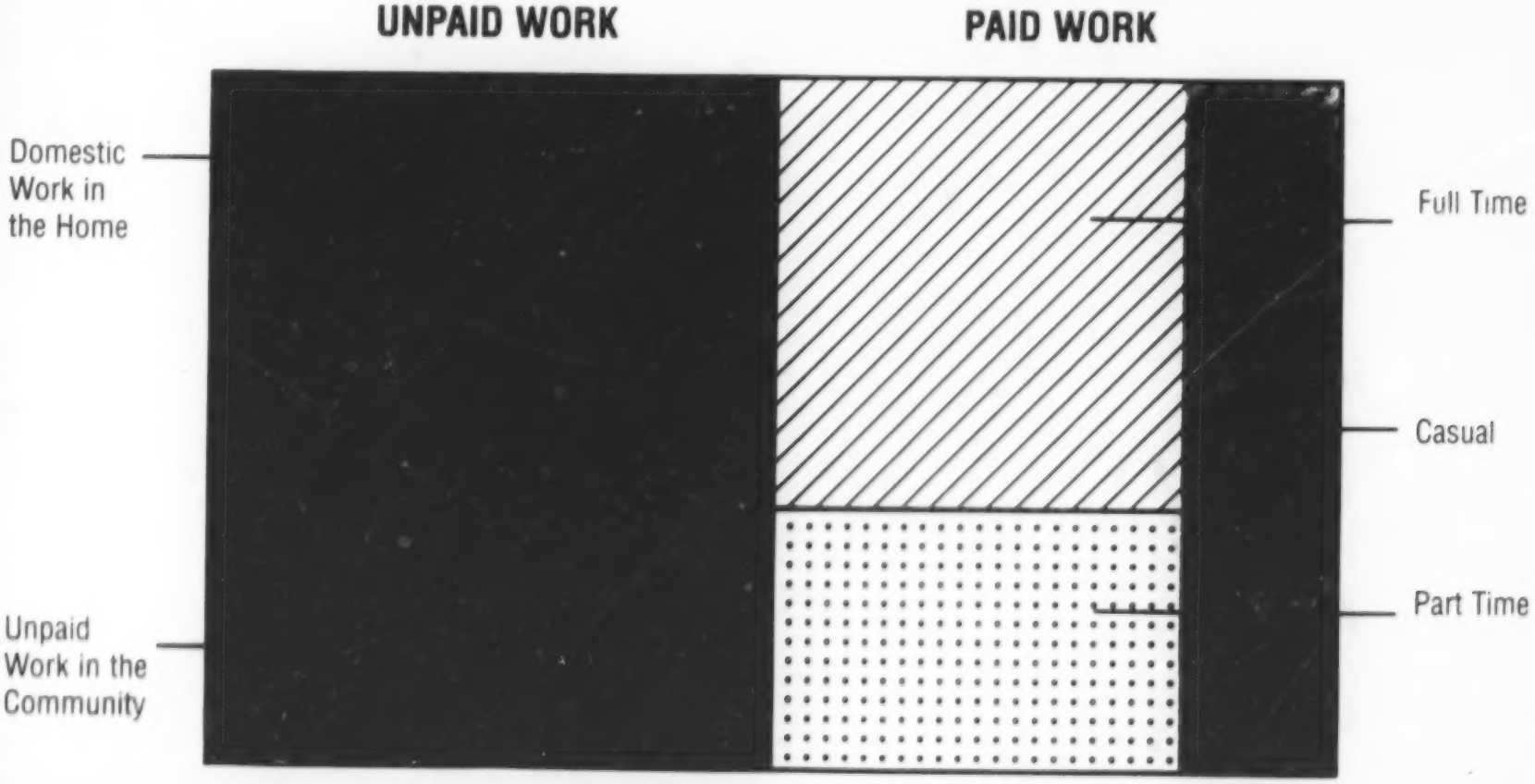
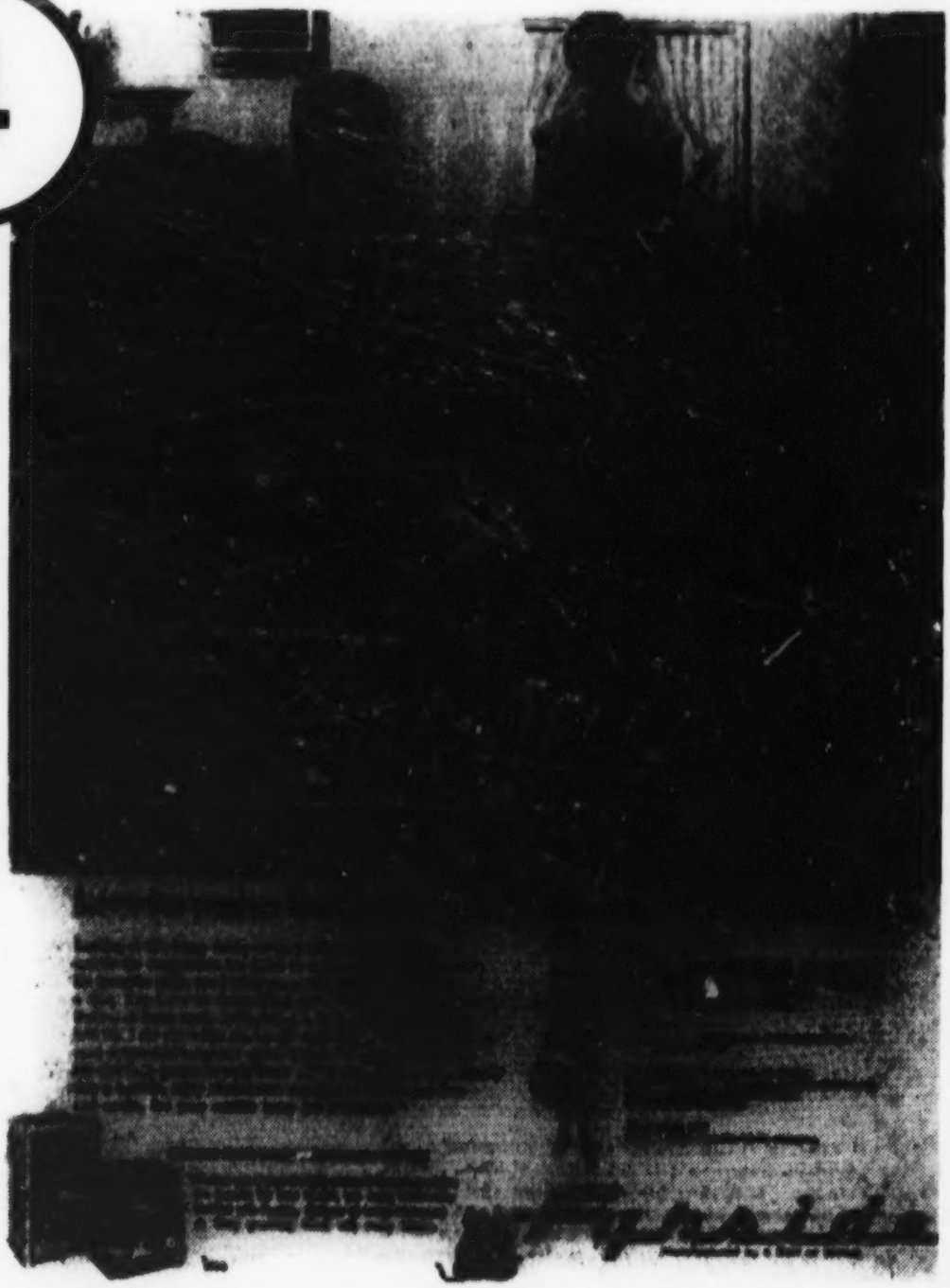

UNPAID WORK
PAID WORK
Domestic Work in the Home
Unpaid Work in the Community
Full Time
Casual
Part Time

4



SHAPING THE FUTURE - DISCUSSION KIT

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MONTHLY BULLETIN of EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

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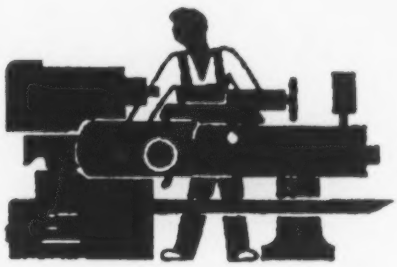

No. 243
February, 1962

COMMONWEALTH BUREAU
of
CENSUS AND STATISTICS
CANBERRA AUSTRALIA

SHAPING THE FUTURE - DISCUSSION KIT

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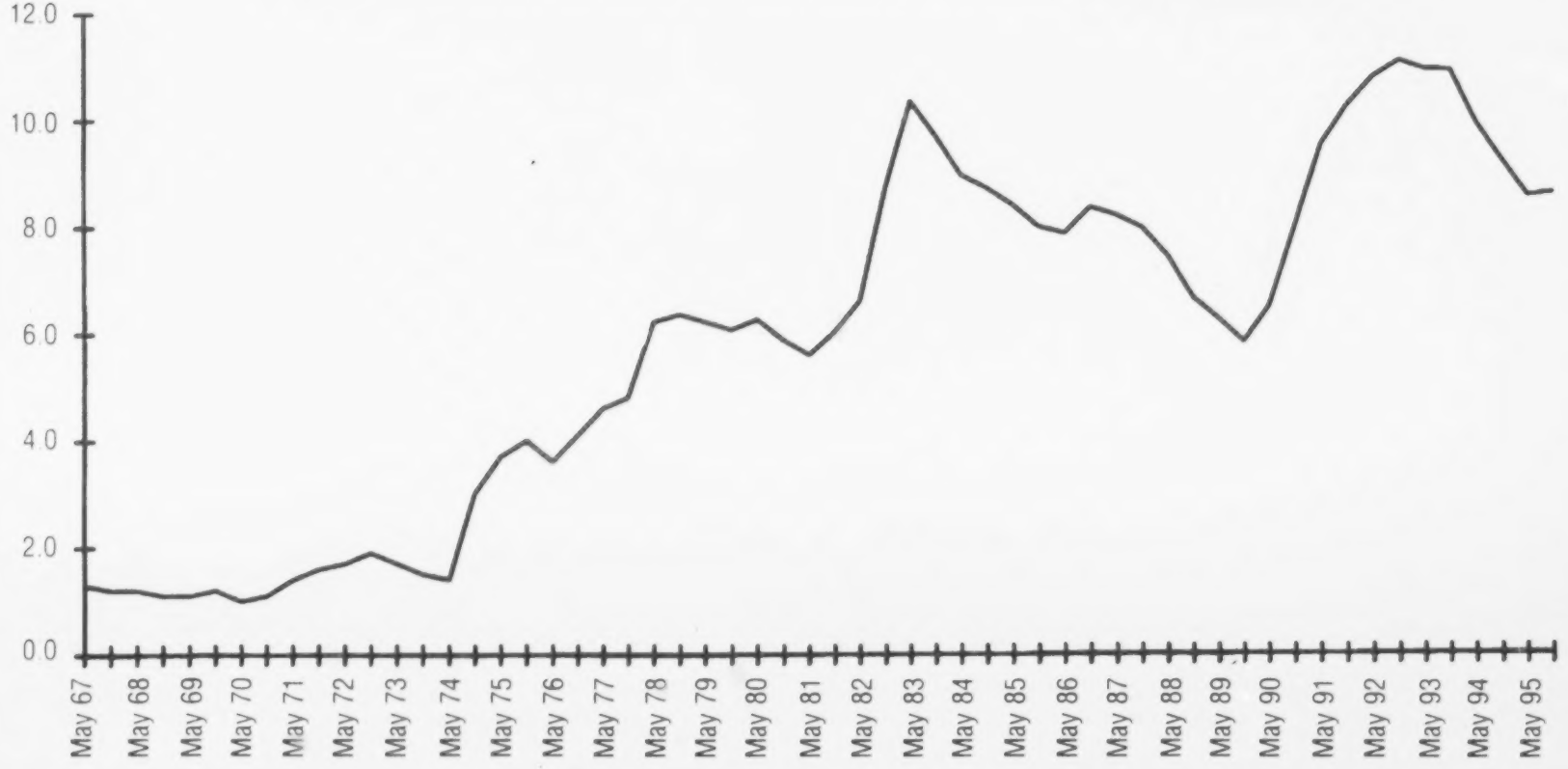
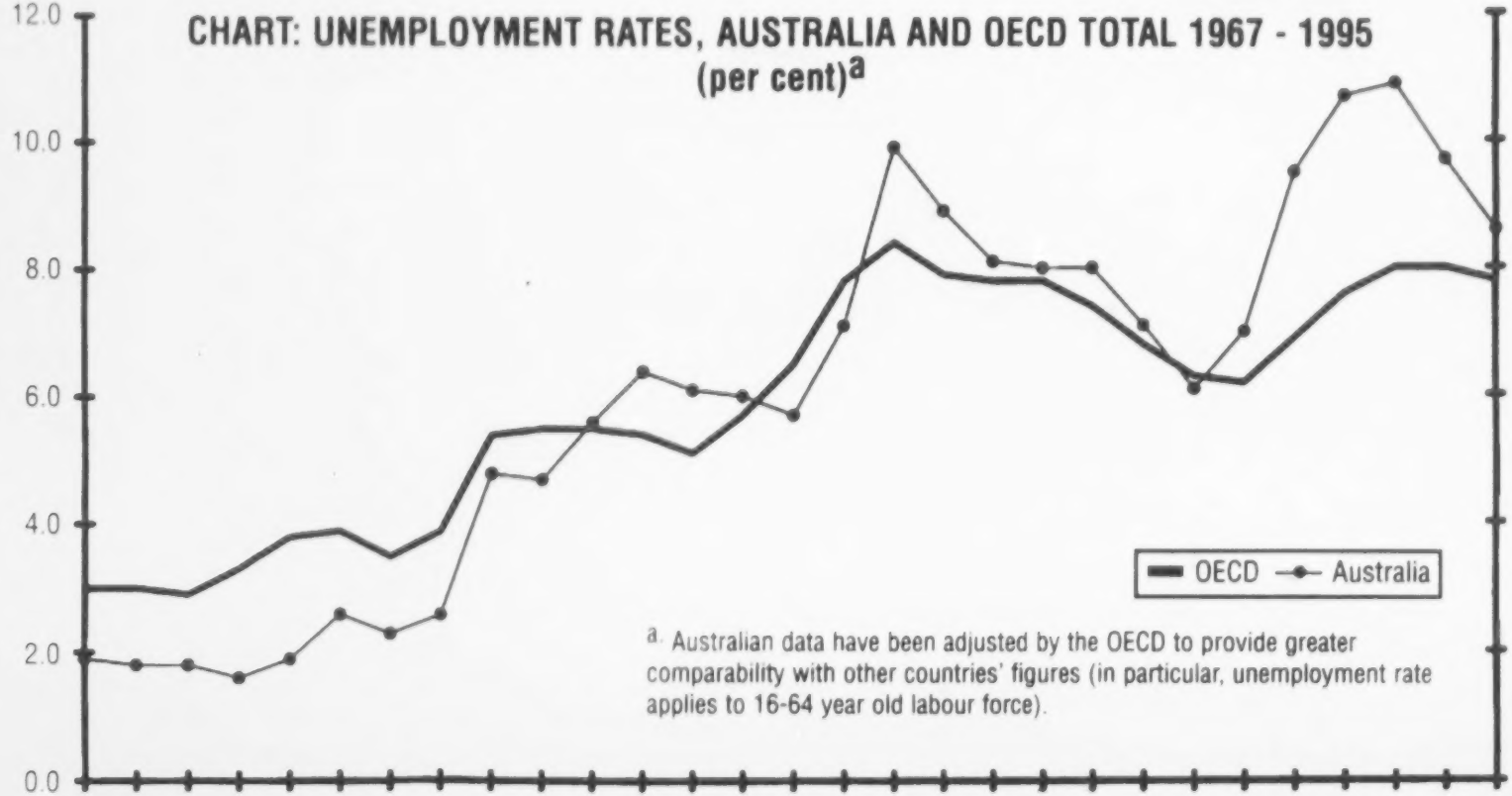
UNEMPLOYMENT RATES, AUSTRALIA, 1967 to 1995 (per cent)



Source: Economic Analysis Branch, Department of Employment, Education and Training

7

CHART: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES, AUSTRALIA AND OECD TOTAL 1967 - 1995
(per cent)[a]



a. Australian data have been adjusted by the OECD to provide greater comparability with other countries' figures (in particular, unemployment rate applies to 16-64 year old labour force).

Source: Economic Analysis Branch, Department of Employment, Education and Training

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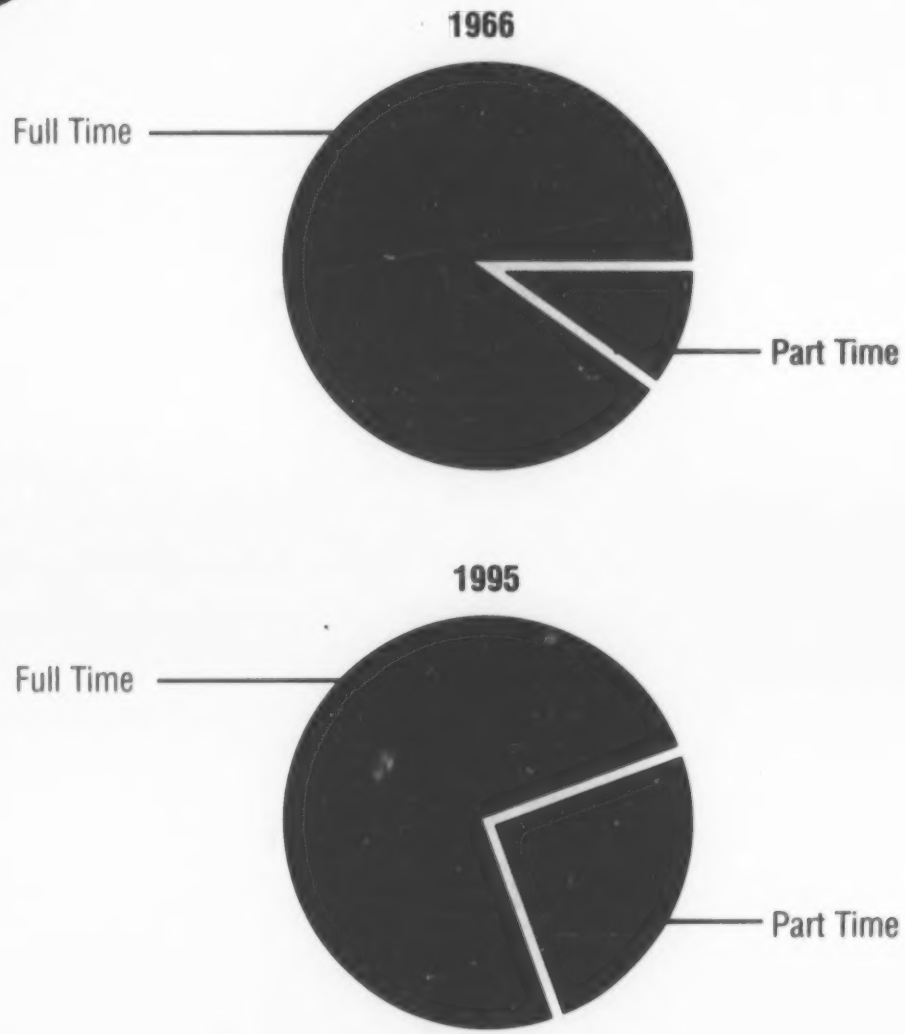
9

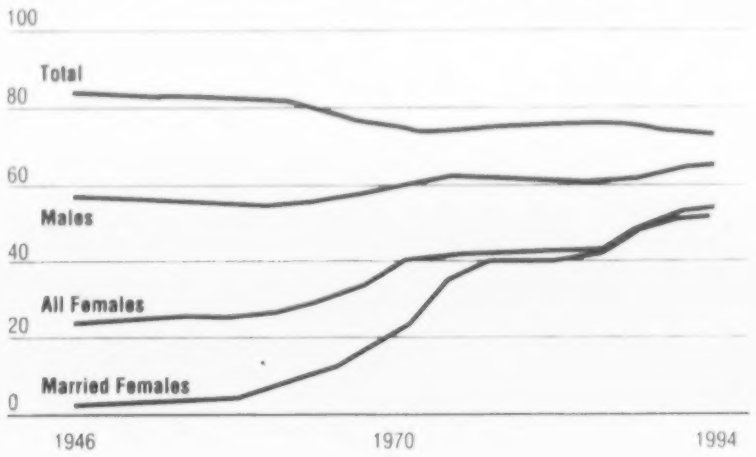
PERCENTAGE OF WORKFORCE EMPLOYED FULL-TIME & PART-TIME 1966 AND 1995



Source: MacNeill, K. 1994, *Reading the Signs*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne

10 LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES (a) 1947 to 1994 (%)

Figure 1: Labour Force Participation Rates (a) 1946 to 1994



Note: Participation rates express the labour force as a percentage of the population aged 15 and over.

Source: MacNeill, K. 1994, *Reading the Signs*. Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne

The Victorian Women's Trust was established in 1985 with a gift of $1 million to the women of Victoria as part of the State's 150th anniversary celebrations. The Trust's primary commitment is to make a difference to the lives of women in Victoria. This, together with its commitment to diversity, is reflected in the motto, "making a difference". The Trust supports women's endeavours in a number of ways:

- through its annual grants program;
- through making available to women's groups a range of services such as advocacy, promotion and networking;
- through initiatives focussing on women's economic independence and on women and work; and
- through enterprise programs which pioneer ways for women to achieve independence.

Over the past decade the Trust has provided more than $1 million in grants to women's projects dealing with issues ranging from economic independence to domestic murder to girls' access to the rock music industry. The Trust has also operated the Women's Enterprise Connection and the Koorie Women Mean Business Project which have assisted women seeking to establish their own business and community enterprises.

The Trust's work is funded by interest from investments and, increasingly importantly, by community support in the form of donations and membership subscriptions. For further information about the Trust or any of its activities contact:

Executive Officer
Victorian Women's Trust
First Floor, 387 Lt. Bourke Street
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WOMEN SHAPING THE FUTURE

The future of work is an important issue which will affect every one of us. It is not something which should be left only to politicians or 'experts'. We should all play a part in shaping our shared future, but all too often women's experiences and voices have been missing from discussion and decisions about work and the economy. This kit is designed to inform and empower women to participate in debates and decisions about the future of work in Australia.

WOMEN SHAPING THE FUTURE encourages women to draw on their own experience and knowledge to think about the future of work and to discuss the ways in which they can help to shape the kind of society which they want for the future. At the same time, it provides a wealth of information that assists in coming to grips with the complex changes that are transforming our world.

WOMEN SHAPING THE FUTURE was produced through the Brotherhood of St Laurence's Future of Work Project with funding provided by the Victorian Women's Trust.

THE FUTURE OF WORK

THE FUTURE OF WORK PROJECT

The Brotherhood of St Laurence Future of Work Project is examining the changes which are re-shaping work in Australia and the implications of those changes for the Australian community. The Brotherhood's purpose in undertaking the Project is to identify how we can shape our shared future so as to:

- improve the position of those who are, or are likely to be, most disadvantaged;
- prevent the creation of new forms of disadvantage and inequality; and
- ensure that all Australians have an adequate standard of living and a meaningful place in society.

THE FUTURE OF WORK PROJECT has been generously supported by the Body Shop, the Victorian Women's Trust, the William Buckland Foundation, the Flora and Frank Leith Trust, Wardley's, the Mercantile Mutual Foundation and North Pty Ltd.

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